

What species? Northern Goshawk How many? 1

Location? Lake Hendricks-Howard County Conservation Park

Type of Habitat? woods, low hills, and a small lake

When? date(s): March 13, 1988 time: 10:30 AM to 10:31 AM

Who? your name and address: Mary Jo Hartogh, R#2 Box 115, Elma, IA 50628

Others with you: My daughter Annjean, age 26

Others before or after you: None

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

We were in the car watching our birdfeeders when this hawk-like bird came soaring over the treetops at us. I fell out of the car and trained my binoculars on its head as it passed directly over us and as it soared past. I saw the dark patches on each side of the head which extend from the back of the head to the eye. Otherwise I got the general impression of an off-white underside softly mottled with grey, with no distinguishing marks or tail bands. From its shape it had to have been an accipiter with the shorter, rounded wings and slim straight tail. It seemed much larger than a crow, but not as large as a red-tailed hawk. As it soared away it may have flapped 2 or 3 times, but it mostly just glided at what seemed a tremendously fast speed. I could see the back and upper parts of the wings were dark as it got farther away. The silhouette of the wings was in a straight line like a pencil line with a head in the middle.

Similar species; how eliminated:
The Petersen guide on p. 170 gives the shapes from below and we matched that of an accipiter, not a buteo, and especially not a gyrfalcon. Cooper's and sharp-shinned would be smaller and should show darker tail bands and possibly reddish striations horizontally on the upper abdomen. Also, sharpie usually looks brown-colored.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.
The Dakotas, Nebraska, and Minnesota were getting a terrific snowstorm that morning. It was overcast but no longer snowing lightly. We were facing north, using an 8 X 40 binocular. Trees may be 40 to 50 ft. high.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:
Seen ~~it~~ 2 times before in Wisconsin, but not as close. And someone else said it was a goshawk. Just saw sharp-shinned and Cooper's on CBC.

References and persons consulted before writing description:
Petersen, Petersen's Hawks, Golden Guide, National Geographic, and Master Audubon guides.

How long before field notes made? 1 hr. this form completed? 1 wk.

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).