

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Golden Eagle How many? 1
 Location? Marshall County, ^{Highway #14} along Iowa River at north edge of Marshall town
 Type of habitat? thin edge of riverbottom woods & open fields, edge of town, on other side of river
 When? date(s): December 2, 1983 time: 10:45 to 10:50 AM
 Who? your name and address: Beth Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowa 50148
 others with you: none
 others before or after you: none that I know of

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, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

As I neared the river I saw a huge bird flying with great wide-arcwing wing beats for a few moments (as if it had just become airborne). It was much too large for a buteo or a vulture. As it flew & soared closer I could see a uniformly brownish-black bird with the broad long wings held flat while soaring, a thick neck & big head. Finally it tilted so I could see the dark wing linings contrasting with the not-quite-so-dark primaries & secondaries, I saw no gold wash.

Similar species and how eliminated: large buteos - this bird was huge compared to a Red-tail or Rough-legged; or Bald Eagle - no white head & tail for an adult, & this bird had dark wing linings, not white in wing linings as an immature Bald Eagle; turkey vulture - this much bigger than vulture, & with eagle flight
 Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? not the rocking flight of a vulture, or a dihedral.

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

sky was clear with sun shining at 90° angle toward bird; when first seen it was about 1/4 mile away, but that distance was narrowed to 1/2 that & finally eagle was about 80' away - I used binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen many buteos, vultures & Bald Eagles, and several Golden Eagles.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Guides: Peterson's new guide, Robbins guide, new National Geographic guide

How long before field notes made? at once this form completed? Dec 14th

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