

Berna DBi
April 20, 1992

Dear Tom,

Hi Tom, I bet you thought I had died. Nope, just not much birding excitement lately. I am sending you this short report of some significance that I encountered yesterday. Here goes. Edit as you see fit.

SWAINSON'S HAWK FALLOUT IN CHEROKEE COUNTY

On April ~~20~~^{19th}, 1992 at 7A.M. I was traveling south of Cherokee on U.S.59. About 5 miles from Cherokee I noticed several hawks on fence posts along the highway. As I pulled over to look more closely I saw more on the ground. Using my spotting scope I realized that they were Swainson's hawks. I counted 53 from that location. Moving on south for another 2 miles then west I counted about 18 more. I then crossed the Little Sioux River at ~~Quimby~~^{Quimby} and drove north. I soon encountered more Swainson's. I stopped and counted 167 from that location noting that there was a hawk on 43 consecutive fence posts.

I immediately contacted Marion Brewer who went to the above mentioned locations and verified the numbers and specie as Swainson's. As soon as Marion got back home a farmer called to say that he had 79 hawks in his field. This location was about 3 miles N from the largest group of hawks we saw. Adding them all up I estimate that we saw between 300 and 325 Swainson's Hawks and I'm sure we missed a few.

The day was wet, cloudy and calm. The previous day was very rainy. Nightcrawlers were everywhere. We watched many of the hawks picking up and eating the worms. It was a great situation to view all of the color variations from normal to melanistic. Most had left the area by 1:30 P.M.

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