

5 min., until bird disappeared from view to west.

13. HABITAT: aerial, over pastures and chenier woods.

14. BEHAVIOR OF BIRD/CIRCUMSTANCES OF OBSERVATION (flying, feeding, resting, etc. - include and stress any habits used in identification; relate events surrounding the observation):

a gliding, soaring migrant, occasionally flapping and banking into broad spirals as it rode on a north wind from east to west. Sighting coincided with impressive numbers of other migrating hawks moving east to west following passage of a cold front. SWC first spotted the bird almost due east of us as it soared in a WNW direction. We were standing in a large open area near the barn at Willow Island. The bird passed to the north of us at 200-300 m, at which point we were able to get good looks at the bird gliding in profile. The bird was about 200 ft. high during most of the observation time. When the bird passed us, it continued directly away to the WNW so that we couldn't see much except a tail-end silhouette. Finally, after the bird was about 1000 m WNW of us, it started banking around into a series of 4-5 left hand circles. Despite the distance, these maneuvers allowed us to view additional features of the wings and tail that we hadn't been able to see earlier. The bird gradually became a speck and disappeared to the west.

15. DESCRIPTION (include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include if possible: total length or relative size compared to other species present or familiar species; body bulk, shape, and proportions; bill, eye, leg and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species):

The bird was quite large. Although there was nothing for direct size comparison, the bird seemed much too large for anything other than an eagle. There were Accipiters, kestrels, Broad-winged Hawks, and Red-tailed Hawks passing by at similar distances for indirect size comparisons, and the eagle was much larger than these. The bird was overall uniform blackish-brown in color. The tail was relatively long and broad. When the bird banked, we could clearly see that the basal 2/3 of the tail was white and that the distal 1/3 was blackish. The underside of each wing was entirely dark (including flight feathers), except that the bases of the primaries were whitish, forming a large whitish patch. No white was visible on the upper surface of the wing. The underparts were uniform blackish-brown with no pale streaking. When the bird was at its closest point to us, SWC was able to see that there was a paler brown fringe on the nape area and around the sides of the bird's neck. DLD could not see the latter mark. We could not make out any details of the bird's tarsi and feet. The bird seemed proportionately long and narrow-winged for such a large bird, with slightly upswept primary tips. The wings were held just slightly above horizontal. Also, as eagles go, the bird appeared proportionately small-headed and small-billed.

16. VOICE: did not call.

17. SIMILAR SPECIES (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

All large, dark Buteos are eliminated by size and by the combination of the tail and underwing pattern. Vultures eliminated by feathered head, tail pattern, and underwing pattern. Immature Bald Eagle eliminated by tail pattern, underwing pattern, smooth blackish-brown underparts. Bald Eagle would also look proportionately larger-headed, larger-billed, shorter/broader-winged.

18. PHOTOGRAPHS OR TAPE RECORDINGS OBTAINED (By whom? Attached?): none.

19. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SPECIES:

both observers have extensive experience with Golden and Bald Eagles in the western U.S.

20. AIDS (list books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification):

a) at time of observation: none.

b) after observation: none.

21. THIS DESCRIPTION WRITTEN FROM: _____ notes made during observation; X notes made after observation (date: 10/4/88, 1 PM); X memory.

22. ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION? YES . If not, explain:

23. SIGNATURE OF REPORTER:

Donna L. Dittmann

Steven W. Cardiff

24. DATE AND TIME OF WRITING THIS ACCOUNT: 6 October 1988, 5:30 PM

4 Oct 88

Golden Eagle - Willow Is.

- noon duration = 3 min as bird soared
east to west inland from chertier
closest 500m - banking for 10 1 km

large blackish-brown eagle - shape -
long broad wings, broad tail with "little"
head proportions of GE - both were
concerned of 10 before bird finally banked;
banked - prominent white base to 2/3 of tail,
white patch in undersurface of primaries.
SWC could detect golden hackles w/ 10x50
binos on neck indicating of a 1st yr. bird.

25 SSH + 10

8 WS

2 CH

30 WTBis

1 RTF

3 DCCorm

15 AK

10,000 RWOS

5 NH

1 BS

Willow Is. 11⁰⁰ - 1⁰⁰ 20 Barn Swallow