

**REPORT TO THE
LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE**

1. Common and scientific name:
Golden Eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos*
2. Number of individuals seen, sexes, ages, general plumage, etc.
One immature bird
3. Locality:
We first saw the bird from a dirt/shell road that leads to an oil well, south of mile marker 1 on LA Hwy 380. This post is one mile east of LA Hwy 99. Later we saw it from LA Hwy 99 just south of its intersection with Hwy 380. These locations are near Thornwell in Jefferson Davis Parish, LA.
4. Date(s) when seen:
Saturday, 8 February 1992
5. Times of day when seen:
About 12:00 noon-12:30 PM
6. Reporting observer and address:
John P. Sevenair, 325 Stafford Place, New Orleans, LA 70124
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:
Mac Myers and Nancy Newfield
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:
Joe Kleiman and another birder said they saw a Golden Eagle in the same place an hour or so later. This bird may be the same individual found last fall by Gwen and Al Smalley, which I think was also seen in the same location.
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and amount of light):
The weather was clear and sunny, and the bird was seen soaring against the sky. Its silhouette was seen very well, and the bird flew far enough away from the sun line for us to make out color and patterns.
10. Optical equipment:
Zeiss 7x42 binoculars.
11. Distance to bird:
Minimum about 50 feet, more typically 100-300 ft.
12. Duration of observation:
We watched the bird for about 15 minutes all told.
13. Habitat (general and specific):
The bird was soaring and flying in the air above an area consisting of some harvested, stubbly rice fields along with some grassy and overgrown fields. There are a few oil wells in the area, and the small town of Thornwell is nearby.
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):
When seen from the oil well road the bird was soaring and circling, not repeatedly in one place (as in a thermal), but as if in some kind of search pattern. There was a flock of thousands of geese of several species (mostly Snow/Blue and Greater White-fronted) there, and as far as we could tell they were all in the air. Then the eagle circled to the south, out of clear sight. A few minutes later it came back and circled over us for a few minutes, coming within about 100' overhead.
A few minutes after that we were checking a flock of mostly Greater White-fronted Geese for possible Brant (no luck) when the eagle suddenly swooped down on a concentration of about 15 geese that were standing about 50' away

from us. He got within 10 or 20' of the geese, which exploded out of there almost like a covey of quail. (I didn't know geese could move that fast.)

15. Description (Include what was actually seen, not what should have been seen. Include if possible: total length; body bulk; shape, bill, eye, and leg characteristics; color and pattern of plumage, etc.)

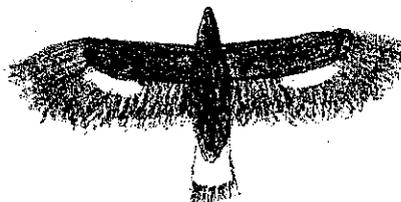
This was a huge raptor, a bird that made the geese and a nearby Red-tailed Hawk look small by comparison. Its wingspread was approximately twice that of a Greater White-fronted Goose. When he swooped on the standing flock he made those geese look small by comparison too.

Its overall color was dark brown. In flight its head extended clearly in front of its wings--it wasn't small-headed like a Turkey Vulture. As it circled the back of its neck appeared to be golden-brown, but I didn't see this characteristic very well.

The wing linings were dark brown, contrasting with a small area of white at the inner ends of the inner primaries. The secondaries and most of the area of the primaries were dark. The wings were long and broad but not pointed. My impression was that they were slightly narrower where they joined the body than they were further away. The wings were held at a slight dihedral while soaring; the V made by the wings was shallower than a Turkey Vulture's.

The underparts, from throat to undertail coverts, were dark brown. The undertail coverts contrasted with the clear (not blotchy) white of the inner portion of the undertail. The tail was fairly long, and the end of the tail had a broad brown band. The top of the tail had the same pattern. The tail appeared to be slightly wedge-shaped.

Here's an attempt to translate the field-note sketch into something more comprehensible.



16. Voice:

Not heard.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observations):

Immature Bald Eagles have blotchy white areas on the tail (not clear white), and have blotchy white areas on the underwings (including the wing linings). This bird had a clear-cut pattern, and the underwings were completely dark. Immature Bald Eagles also do not have a gold area on the back of the neck.

Turkey Vultures have small heads, aren't that large overall, have no white areas under the wings and on the tail, and don't dive on geese.

This bird was much larger than a Red-tailed Hawk seen nearby. Red-tailed Hawks are smaller than Greater White-fronted Geese, while this bird was much larger. Northern Harriers are small too, and paler underneath than this bird was.

18. Photographs:
Mac Myers took some.
19. Previous experience with this species:
I've seen a few Golden Eagles in Alaska and California, some years ago.
20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification
a) At the time of observation:
We called out characteristics of the bird to each other.
b) After observation:
The National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, second edition.
21. This description written from: Notes made during observation; notes made after observation; memory.
A copy of the notes is enclosed.
22. Are you positive of your identification? yes If not, explain:
23. Signature of reporter:

24. Date and time of writing this account:
9:45 PM, Saturday 8 February 1992.

12-72 15 100 g & 5 up
 2/8/92
 broad wings
 sorta gold
 pale on
 nape
 dk brown
 a little
 paler
 wedge shape
 white

Great Big
 Raptor
 slight dihedral
 2x geese
 wingspan
 at least

5 of
 mile 1 LA 380 (Ed 99)

12/7/20
 99 | 380
 speckle bellies
 swapped
 Speckl
 2IE
 faded red
 back of
 head

about a
 goose with
 a collar

Byers
1992

92-17B

Golden Eagle

8 Feb. 1992 Jefferson Davis Parish, LA, at and
near the intersection of Hwys 99 and 380
Appx 12-12:15 PM

1 immature bird, excellent light, wheeled
to give good views all angles. Dived
geese on ground. Distance 80-200+ yds.

Very large and dark. Base of tail white,
remainder dark. From both above and
below white spot at base of primaries.
Golden hackles of rear head, nape
shined when bird wheeled. Head and
bill not so large as in Bald Eagle, did not
extend so far beyond wings.

Photos

w/ N. Newfield + John Sevenais
also seen by Joe Kleiman

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of unusual birds. It may be used flexibly and need not be used at all. Leave blank any details not observed. Attach additional sheets if necessary. Please print or type. Attach drawings, photographs, etc.; include all photos if an obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to the Secretary of the LOS Bird Records Committee.

1. Common and scientific name: Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g. 2ad. in breeding plumage): 1 imm.
3. Locality: Louisiana: Jefferson Davis Parish: at & near
intersection of Hwy 99 + 380
4. Date(s) when seen: 8 Feb, 1992
5. Times of day when seen: 12 - 12:15 pm
6. Reporting observer and address: B. Mac, Myers III
730 Frenchman St. New Orleans, LA 70116
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:
Nancy Newfield, John Severino
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:
Joe Kleiman
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): excellent, various angles
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): 10x40 Zeiss - good
11. Distance to bird: 80 - 200 + yds.
12. Duration of observation: 15 minutes - two separate observations
13. Habitat (general and specific):
Rice fields
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):
Mostly soaring and wheeling overhead,
stooped on a flock of geese which were feeding
on the ground.
15. Description (Include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen. Include if possible: total length; body bulk; shape, bill, eye, and leg characteristics; color and pattern of plumage, etc. Stress field marks):
see attached notes

16. Voice:

not heard

17. Similar species (include how they are eliminated by your observations):

see photos and description

18. Photographs (Was it photographed? By whom? Attached?):

2 slides by Myers attached

19. Previous experience with this species:

a few birds over a period of many years -
seen in western U.S.

20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification

a) at time of observation; none

b) after observation: Hawks in Flight, F.G. to Birds of Prey

21. This description written from: ___ notes made during observation; X notes made after observation; ___ memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification? yes. If not, explain:

NOTE: This is quite possibly the same bird seen by the Smalleys in Oct. 1991 near this same site.

23. Signature of reporter: B. Mac Myers II

24. Date and time of writing this account:

28 April 1992 8:00 P.M.