

**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:
Cameron Parish, LA, on a gravel road about a mile south of Louisiana Highway 717 (not far from the Shot's Hunting Club turnoff).
4. Date(s) when seen:
Sunday 7 February 1993
5. Times of day when seen:
12:45 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
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:
None that I know of. A Golden Eagle was reported at the L.O.S. winter meeting, but Nancy Newfield tells me that that bird was seen about 15 miles north of Lake Charles, about 40 miles away from LA 717.
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and amount of light):
The bird was soaring in a clear, cloudless sky.
10. Optical equipment:
Zeiss 7x42 binoculars.
11. Distance to bird:
200-300 yards
12. Duration of observation:
One or two minutes
13. Habitat (general and specific):
The bird was soaring above an area of rice fields that had been harvested.
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):
The bird was soaring in circles about 100 feet off the ground, moving away from us fairly rapidly. It held its wings at a slight dihedral (not level). There were large numbers of geese (Greater White-fronted, Snow, Blue, Canada, a few Ross') in the area. These flocks of geese were very nervous and spooky, taking off, moving around, and landing again repeatedly. Geese in the same area were placid and hard to spook later in the afternoon.
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.)
The bird was a very large, mostly brown raptor. The silhouette was like a buteo, with broad wings, a broad and fairly short tail, and a projecting head with a hooked bill. The head, body, and most of the wings were brown. Patches on the underwings at the bases of the primaries were white, as was a large area of the tail. The rump also appeared to be white. The end of the tail was brown.
16. Voice:
Not heard

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

Immature Bald Eagles have blotchy white on the underwings, not a well-defined pattern like the one this bird had. Bald Eagles tend to soar with their wings level.

Black Vultures are black (not brown), have white on the wingtips (not at the base of the primaries and on the tail), have shorter tails and smaller heads than this bird did, and are smaller overall. Also, geese aren't afraid of vultures.

Turkey Vultures have pale brown primaries and secondaries, small heads, and relatively narrow wings. They're smaller than this bird was.

Northern Harriers are much smaller than this bird (we saw some in the area), have narrower wings relative to the body, and have a different pattern of white underneath.

Red-tailed Hawks are also much smaller (we saw some of those too), and also have a different pattern of white underneath.

18. Photographs:

None were taken.

19. Previous experience with this species:

Three of us observed a similar bird very carefully on 8 February 1992 near Thornwell on the other side of Lake Arthur. I have also seen Golden Eagles in Alaska and California.

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

a) At the time of observation:

Mac Myers saw the bird first.

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; x notes made after observation; ___ memory.

Notes were made immediately after the observation. A copy of these notes is enclosed.

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

23. Signature of reporter:

John P. Severain

24. Date and time of writing this account:

7 February 1993 at 8 PM.

⊙ Eagle nr spooky geese 12:45 2/7/93

Big soaring raptor
white on tail - dark terminal
rump

⊙ white area

slight dihedral seen fr. above

~ 1 min.
clear bright day