

Louisiana Ornithological Society's
LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Report Form

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review (to assure that all information involving an observation is accounted for). Attach additional pages as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of fieldnotes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. English and Scientific names: Harris' Hawk
(*Parabuteo unicinctus*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g. 2 ad.in breeding or alternate plumage): one in adult plumage
3. Locality: LOUISIANA; Lafayette
(parish)
1 mile south of Hwy. 90 on Hwy. 719 (between Duson and Rayne)
(specific locality)
4. Date(s) when observed: 2 January 1995 (Lafayette CBC)
5. Time(s) of day when observed: about 1:00 PM
6. Reporting observer and address: Steven W. Cardiff & Donna L. Dittmann
Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): good; most of time, bird to west of us, sun to south; partly cloudy, light N wind, cool
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Leica Ultra 10 X 42 binoculars
11. Distance to bird(s): bird first flew over our heads with 100 ft., then moved away to about 500 meters and began soaring, then disappeared to west
12. Duration of observation: at least 10 minutes

13. **Habitat:** bird only seen in flight, first over fallow, grassy fields, then over woods along bayou
14. **Behavior of bird/circumstances of observation** (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): DLD first spotted bird as it flew relatively low over us from east to west. As bird continued directly west, DLD did a double-take and then yelled to SWC. When bird reached wooded bayou across field to west of Hwy. 719, it began to soar on rising thermals, and slowly gained altitude and drifted south. It was joined by a soaring immature Northern Harrier and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. After about 10 minutes, during which the harrier made several aggressive passes at the Harris' Hawk, the Harris' moved off to the west-northwest out of sight.
15. **Description** (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species, body bulk, shape, proportions, bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species): A medium-sized, *Buteo*-like hawk, about the size of a small (male) Red-tailed Hawk or large (female) Red-shouldered Hawk, proportionately larger, heavier, broader-winged, shorter- and broader-tailed than a N. Harrier (direct comparisons). Entirely brownish-black, with chestnut "shoulder patch" (at least including the lesser and median upperwing coverts), white rump patch, undertail coverts, basal 1/3 or so of tail, and terminal band of tail. Bill dark; bare, yellowish cere and area of bare yellowish skin extending from bill to in front of eye. Legs and feet bare, yellow. Bird too distant to see eye color. We did not see the chestnut feathering on the "thighs" or underwing coverts, as this was lost against the dark bird at a distance and with the bird's underside "shaded" in the early afternoon light. DLD's rough field sketch notes that the inner secondaries were distinctly shorter, giving the wing a "tucked-in" effect near the body. The bird was in good plumage, with no sign of plumage wear (at least at a distance, in flight), missing or broken feathers, molt, leg bands, or jesses.
16. **Voice:** not heard
17. **Similar species** (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Overall dark coloration combined with chestnut wing patch, tail pattern, and facial skin configuration eliminates all other superficially similar species.
18. **Photographs or tape recordings obtained?** (by whom? attached?): none
19. **Previous experience with this species:** Considerable in AZ & TX. Also in CA (escapes and released birds only), NW Mexico (SWC), and NW Peru.
20. **Identification aids:** (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):
a. at time of observation: none

b. after observation: none

21. This description is written from: ___ notes made during the observation; ___ notes made after the observation (date: _____); X memory.

22. Are you positive of your identification if not, explain: YES. ID is straightforward. Origin, on the other hand, is debatable. Several other recent LA records have been dismissed as escapes or deliberate introductions by misguided falconers. Apparently, there is evidence of a major northward dispersal by this species during fall-winter 94-95. We feel confident that this record **does not** pertain to the individual that spent the fall and winter about 10 mi. to the SSW in the vicinity of the Vincent Refuge (within a 1-2 mi. radius of Hwy. 35 X Hwy. 699). Although the latter bird sometimes went for days without being seen, and was easily missed despite considerable time investment, it was never seen outside a 2-3 mile diameter circle centered on the Vincent refuge.

23. Signature of reporter: Donnal Dittman (date) (time)

Steven W. Cardiff

