

LOUISIANA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

98-122

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 immature
3. Locality: Louisiana: Cameron Parish: Lacassine N.W.R.
just northwest of the southernmost entrance road, west of Streater Rd.
4. Date(s) when seen: 29 Dec. 1998
5. Times of day when seen: 12:40 - 12:43
6. Reporting observer and address:
B. Mac Myers II 320 Sharon Dr., New Orleans, LA 70124
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird:
Glenn Ousset
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird:
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): ^{n/a} Excellent, I was looking north, the sun was behind me
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): 22x60 Bushnell, 10x40 Zeiss, both very good to Excellent.
11. Distance to bird: At first sighting about 400-500 yards, later 150-200 yds.
12. Duration of observation: 5 minutes
13. Habitat (general and specific):
Rice field stubble, with brushy margins and trees along extreme edges, the fields were shallowly flooded.
14. Behavior (flying, feeding, resting, etc.; include and stress any habits used in identification):
Flying low over the fields when spotted, then circled up and came closer before sailing off to the north.
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):

A large dark raptor with striking light/white patches in wings and around base of tail, with tawny/golden color on upperwing and nape. No other raptors were nearby for judging size, but when it was flying low over the ground, it had the "ponderous" wing beats of really large birds such as turkey vultures and eagles.

Overall the bird was quite dark brownish black above and below. There were conspicuous white patches near the bases of inner primaries (and maybe outer secondaries also).

This white was most conspicuous from below, but it was also visible on upper surface. The proximal part of tail (maybe 60-65%) was white, and the remainder of the tail was blackish - sharply divided from base. Aside from these white areas, there were a few very small scattered white or whitish patches or spots on the breast, belly and wing linings. On the upper surface, the entire forward part of the wings and the nape area appeared tawny / golden. The distribution of this color on the wing coverts was similar to that of the red on adult Red-shouldered Hawk. The color may have been enhanced by the brilliant sunshine and clear atmosphere. The head and bill were "normal"; that is, not the conspicuous projection of a Bald Eagle.

16. Voice: n/a

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

The combination of characters eliminates imm. Bald Eagle, Harris' Hawk and various dark morph buteos - particularly Rough-legged and Ferruginous - all of which were considered as possible candidates for confusion at the time and because I was pointing out stuff to G. Dusset who had never seen one in LA.

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

no

19. Previous experience with this species: a couple in LA, a few dozen out west

20. Aids: List books, illustrations, birders, etc. used in identification
a) at time of observation: Nat. Geographic Guide

b) after observation: Wheeler + Clark's photographic guide to N. Am. Raptors

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

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

23. Signature of reporter: B. Mac Meyer III

24. Date and time of writing this account:

2:40 P.M. 9 Jan. 1999