

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; Vermilion
(parish)
about 2 mi. S Hwy. 699 on Hwy. 35 (12/23/94); 1 mi. W Hwy. 35 on Hwy. 699 (2/24/95)
(specific locality)
4. Date(s) when observed: 23 December 1994 & 24 February 1995
5. Time(s) of day when observed: about 3 PM on 12/23; about 10 AM on 2/24
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): on 2/24/95, Frank B. Gill, David Agro, and George Armistead from Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): many observers. We believe that the bird was first reported by Harvey Patten in late Oct. 1994; subsequently seen by many observers into March 1995
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Excellent on 12/23/94. Overcast but good on 2/24/95.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Leica Ultra 10 X 42 binoculars

11. **Distance to bird(s):** on 12/23, with 40 ft. using car as a blind (we couldn't get bird to fly until we got out of the car!); on 2/24, about 200 ft. from the highway (after a few minutes, with 7 people standing on the road, bird finally got nervous and flew farther away).
12. **Duration of observation:** at least 10 minutes
13. **Habitat:** agricultural area with scattered hedgerows and clumps of trees near houses, woods along bayous. On 12/23, bird sitting on telephone pole, then flew to Pecan tree over house; on 2/24, sitting 10 ft. up in hackberry along the outer edge of a wooded bayou/ditch west of hwy. just N of Hwy. 699 curve, then flew to tall dead tree behind yard.
14. **Behavior of bird/circumstances of observation** (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):
Perched, relatively tame; seen in flight when approached too closely. On 12/23 we (and Curt Sorrells in separate vehicle) searched for the bird for about 4 hrs. before it appeared (after Curt left) along Hwy. 35 at a spot that we had checked several times earlier. We missed the bird while cruising the area on 29 January (overcast, cold, and windy) and 11 February (overcast, windy, periods of rain during frontal passage).
15. **Description** (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possibly: 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. Entirely brownish-black, with chestnut "shoulder patch" and thighs, 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. Eye dark. We could not make out the chestnut feathering on the underwing coverts. **SEE PHOTOS.** The bird was in good plumage (at least by the dates that we saw it) with no sign of plumage wear, 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?): Color slides by SWC attached.
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 we saw on the Lafayette CBC, 2 Jan. 1995.

23. Signature of reporter:

Donna L. Dohman

13 April 1995

(date) (time)

Steven W. Cardiff