

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 pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. English and Scientific names: Common Black Hawk, *Buteogallus anthracinus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): 1 adult, sex unknown
3. Parish: Cameron
Specific Locality: Creole, 29.791296, -93.113206
4. Date(s) when observed: 11/10/2017
5. Time(s) of day when observed: 4 pm
6. Reporting observer and address: David M. Larson, PhD, Joppa Flats Education Center, Mass Audubon, 1 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport, MA 01950.

I am an ornithologist and educator for Mass Audubon and tour leader for foreign and domestic birding trips. I was leading a birding tour to south west Louisiana, as I have done several times before at this time of year.
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Susan Hardy, volunteer, co-leader
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): see narrative: bright, sunny day; brightly side-lit close dorsal and ventral looks, badly backlit more distant views, nicely lit dorsal view of bird flying away.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Swarovski EL 10x42, < 1 year old

11. Distance to bird(s): drove under perched bird, turned around, drove back to within 100' of ventral side of bird, bird flew west across canal to trees (approx. 29.791472, -93.113868), and then flew northwest.

12. Duration of observation: approx.. 3 sec. view of dorsal side of perched bird, 30 sec. view of ventral side of perched bird, 1 minute view of right side of perched bird (backlit), 15 sec view of flying bird, heading NW (top view only).

13. Habitat: open, highway, canal, trees (note either set of coordinates in google maps on (satellite view)).

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): see above

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, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

Originally seen from the back while it was perched on the cross bar of a power pole just north of where 82 turns north, at 29.791296, -93.113206. We turned around (dicey in minivans) and drove back toward the bird, pulling into the destroyed building lot. The bird flew west before I could get out of the vehicle (probably had 30 sec view of the ventral side before it flew.) It alighted in a tree on the west side of the canal at about 29.791472, -93.113868. Of course this was in the afternoon and the bird was badly backlit. After we had all gotten out of the vans, the bird flew off to the northwest, low, but giving us a clear view of the tail and dorsal aspect, and then was lost to sight behind trees.

Why was this a Common Black Hawk? I have seen many Common Black Hawks and their close relatives in Central America and in southern Texas, as recently as July 2017. This bird appeared to be a typical Black Hawk in shape and flight—broad-winged and chunky. The plumage was uniformly blackish with no spotting or mottling on the dorsal or ventral aspects or on the wings in flight, the sole exception being two white bands on the upper surface of the tail. At the base of the tail there was a wide, uniform and crisp-edged white band. There was a much thinner terminal white band.. We never saw the underside of the bird's wings in flight. From the ventral view, the bill was bright yellow, contrasting sharply with the all black head, and the long tarsus was yellow-orange (almost red-looking).

16. Voice: no vocalization

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

What else could it have been? The only North American confusing species (large black raptor, but not an eagle) would be Harris's Hawk (similar tail pattern, but has white undertail coverts, rufous,

and wrong wing shape), Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk (mottled, tail pattern all wrong, wings wrong shape, legs too short), western Red-tailed Hawk (dark adult has red tail, so that's out, along with shape problems), dark Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks (tail wrong, shape wrong), dark Broad-winged Hawk (too small, wrong shape, short legs), stretching to Short-tailed Hawk (short legs, too small, wrong tail pattern, wrong shape), Zone-tailed Hawk (wrong tail pattern, wing shape).

Reports of Harlan's Hawk nearby (Willow Island; <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40207564>) show a mottled bird that does not look anything like what we saw.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? Attached?): none

19. Previous experience with this species: I have seen many Common Black Hawks and their close relatives in Central America and in southern Texas, as recently as July 2017.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: None, no question in my mind, except "what is this thing doing here?" Discussed field marks with Susan Hardy, co-leader. Then looked at small eastern Sibley.

b. after observation: checked large Sibley Guide to Birds and Raptors of the World for other possibilities.

21. This description is written from:

<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	Same day
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

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

This is a ridiculous sighting on the face of it. I cannot imagine why a species so rare in the US would be so far out of range, perched on a crossbar of a power pole, in Louisiana. I am positive of the characteristics I have reported. Then, my first impression was Common Black Hawk and I saw nothing to dissuade me from that identification. Even now, I cannot reconcile my observations with any other species of raptor in North America.

So, my observational conclusion is Common Black Hawk. Seems ridiculous that it would be in Creole, but there you have it. It would not hurt to keep an eye out. It could still be hanging around.

23. Date: 11/23/2017

Time: 10:09 am

24. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page?

_yes_____

If yes, may we include your name with the report? __yes_____