

**LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE
RARE BIRD DOCUMENTATION**

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Species: Golden Eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos*

Location: Willow Island, Cameron Parish, Louisiana

Date: 3 November 2019

Age and sex: Juvenile or nearly so, sex unknown

Molt status: Unknown

Number of individuals: One

Other observers: Dave Ebbitt, Deborah Mauer, Eamon Corbett, Eugene Huryn, Marky Mutchler, Matt Brady, Matthew Janson, Paul Conover, Scott Scheinhaus, and a few others.

Original observer: Oscar Johnson

Circumstances: A Yellow Rails and Rice Festival field trip. After our sighting of two Golden Eagles the day before at the same location, this was truly remarkable. We were just walking into the woods at Willow Island when I looked up and saw this bird flying west high overhead, at which point I started yelling. Everyone nearby was able to come back out of the woods and get on the bird as it glided west and into the distance. I called Van Remsen, who was nearby, but he and his birding crew weren't able to get back to the parking lot in time to get a good look at the bird, even with a scope. This bird was moving rapidly to the west and was clearly actively migrating, as were many other raptors that morning. Weather: 59-63°, mostly clear, still to Beaufort 2. eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S61165244>

Description: I neglected to take notes on the bird and I only managed a few distant photos, as I spent most of my time trying to get everyone a look at the bird. It was, however, a massive dark raptor with an obvious large white patch at the base of the primaries on both wings. The tail was white with a dark terminal band. I was unable to see any other field marks. Structurally it was large, bulky, and long-winged. The wings were held quite straight when soaring, and arched back slightly when gliding.

Discussion: A pretty straightforward identification, especially given the diagnostic photo. Given that the two birds the day before and this bird were all seen arriving from the east and disappearing to the west on days with lots of active raptor migration, I see no reason to suspect that this bird was one of the same individuals observed the day before.

