

# 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](mailto:zoiseaux@lusfiber.net)> .

1. English and Scientific names: **Golden Eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos***

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):

**One**

3. Parish: **Cameron**

Specific Locality: **Peveto BRAS**

4. Date(s) when observed: **18 October 2022**

5. Time(s) of day when observed:

6. Reporting observer and city/state address

Reporting observer: <b>Paul Conover</b>
City: <b>Lafayette</b>
State: <b>LA</b>

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):

**Overcast, which was good in that it killed potential heatwaves and made the bird visible in the distance, but bad in that it reduced the amount of detail visible.**

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): **Zeiss 10s**

11. Distance to bird(s): **Hard to say. I'd guess about half a mile on the ground leg, but the bird was soaring pretty high, so the hypotenuse would be a bit more. The bird drifted away from me going east, and I was able to follow it until it was over a mile away, maybe much more than a mile.**

12. Duration of observation: **I'd say two to three minutes of viewing time. Enough that I was able to reposition myself using fenceposts and the top strand of wire as a rest several times. During this time I also tried to take photos, which shouldn't have been hard to do, but the camera kept focusing on the cloud cover and losing the bird against the gray. It was only as the bird was getting to the edge of photographic usefulness that I managed to lock onto it.**

13. Habitat: **Coastal plane with scattered woodlots adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico.**

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

**I was on the east side of the woods at the pasture watching a developing flight of hawks that became visible against the backdrop of cloud cover that drifted over, and in the distance I saw a kettle of Turkey Vultures. The vultures were circling in place, acting more like locals than migrants with someplace to go. One vulture was soaring off to the west of the group, and above it was a much larger, more massive bird with a different flight profile. The two birds were moving across the horizon on the same vertical plane, so they were obviously the same distance away from me, allowing for accurate size comparison. The larger bird had a short head and neck (I studied it carefully to see if it possibly had a white head that was disappearing against the background and creating a false impression of a short head, but I could clearly see the front of the head), the tail seemed long, and the silhouette looked like a Golden Eagle no matter how the bird wheeled or banked. The bird drifted off slowly to the east moving in slow soaring circles.**

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*):

**A large dark raptor, clearly larger in wingspan and mass than a nearby Turkey Vulture. Due to lighting conditions identification was based on flight profile and morphology.**

**Buteo-like shape, with broad wings broadest at the secondaries and narrowing on the trailing edge as they joined the body. Leading edge of wing appeared to have gentle elongated S-curve rather than angular shape. Outer primary tips appeared swept back at most viewing angles. Viewed head on, wings were held in slight dihedral. Tail long and rounded or somewhat diamond-shaped.**

**Head and neck short, proportioned like a Buteo like a RTHA rather than the longer head and neck of Bald Eagle.**

**At times I felt I was seeing a pale base to the tail, but if so, not strongly marked as in first year Golden Eagle. I was unable to discern any pale areas in wings.**

16. Voice:

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): **Given the size comparison vs TUVU, the only similar possibility is Bald Eagle. Bald Eagle has a different flight silhouette with long straight wings and primaries typically pointing outward and strongly angled wings when wings bent. Head and neck of Bald Eagle also projects very prominently from shoulders.**

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): **Distant photographs taken about 2/3 of the way through the sighting as the bird moved away from me. The textured sheet of clouds and the fact that the bird was often in profile limited my ability to focus before that. I feel relieved to have gotten anything under the circumstances.**

19. Previous experience with this species: **I've seen many on trips out west, nowhere abundantly but in high enough frequency to feel comfortable with the silhouettes of even distant birds.**

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

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation: **Various photo sources.**

21. This description is written from: **Memory and study of photos.**

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: **Yes. The shape of Golden Eagle is distinctive vs Bald Eagle, and I feel confident identifying either from a distance.**

23. Date: **26 October 2022**

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? \_\_\_\_\_

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



