

## LBRC Report Form

1. English and Scientific names: Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):  
1, juvenile plumage (hatching year)
3. Parish:  
Jefferson Davis
4. Specific Locality:  
1.3 mi NNW of the Thornwell Warehouse Association
5. Date(s) when observed: 11 November 2025
6. Time(s) of day when observed: 11:00am
7. Reporting observer: Erik I. Johnson
8. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):  
Letitia Labbie
9. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):  
None known
10. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Sunny. Bird was deceased.
11. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): None. Photos taken with Samsung F23 smartphone
12. Distance to bird(s): 0 ft
13. Duration of observation: 10 minutes
14. Habitat: Agricultural landscape with rice, crawfish, and duck hunting ponds with patches of deciduous trees
15. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): The landowner apparently knew of the injured bird over the weekend and reported it to

LDWF on 10 November. A video showed that it was alert, but unable to fly beyond a brief hop and glide. Letitia, a licensed raptor rehabilitator, was notified some in the afternoon of 10 November, but no one could get to the bird until the following day. I offered to help in order to get the bird rapidly transported to the LSU Vet School. Letitia and I arrived at the site at 11am, per the landowner's request as to not interfere with duck hunting, the bird had already passed. There were no external signs of trauma (e.g., bullet wound). I was able to transport the carcass to the LSU Vet School, who was going to do an autopsy.

16. 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):

Golden tips to shaggy nape feathers. Feathered tarsi. All-brown with faint paler mottling on thighs. Small white patch at base of underside of primaries. Tail brown with a broad whitish band toward the base that faded into dark about halfway down the tail with a similar pattern above and below. Bill pale mustard, nares yellow, feet/talons yellow, iris brown.

17. Voice: No

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

Feathered tarsi ruled out a bunch of things, like Bald Eagle and various dark morph Buteos, leaving only Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks. Tail and wing pattern, however, did not fit either of those birds.

19. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?):

Yes, my photos included.

20. Previous experience with this species: None in-hand. Seen several times out west between 1997 and 2022, and once in the European Alps in 1997.

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

When I received a landowner cell phone picture and video the evening before, I consulted the Sibley Guide to Birds of North America, Wheeler and Clark Raptor Guide, and Macaulay Library to be sure I could rule out other large dark raptors. The tarsi were not visible from those photos and the nape was not distinctly golden in that lighting (likely taken in low light).

22. Identification aids used when?

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

Yes.

24. Date report completed:

13 November 2025

25. 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

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

Yes











