

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

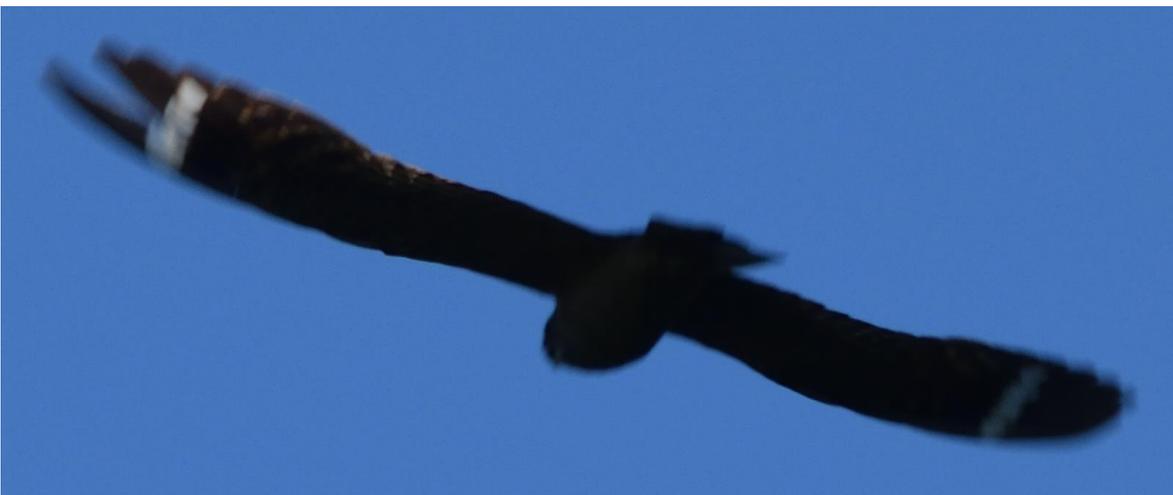
REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
1 male
3. Parish: Cameron
Specific Locality: Peveto Woods, BRAS Sanctuary
4. Date(s) when observed: 4/30/2017
5. Time(s) of day when observed: 5:45-7:30 p.m.
6. Reporting observer and address: Paul E. Conover, Lafayette, LA 70506
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Mac Myers, Phillip Wallace, Erik Enbody and Grace Sprehn, Brad Price, Erik Johnson, Dan Lane, Joelle Finley, Ken Harris, others.
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): Sunny, with bird in sunlight, but conditions varied depending on direction of viewer to bird.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss 10s, Nikon Fieldscope 20-60x, Samsung S4 Galaxy cellphone, Nikon D3300 w/200 mm lens. All in reasonable condition.
11. Distance to bird(s): 25-50 feet, I'd think
12. Duration of observation: Bird was visible throughout most of the time frame listed above. I played with the bird for probably 45 minutes during that span.
13. Habitat: Coastal chenier
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Mac mentioned that there was a nighthawk flying around, trying to land in a pecan. Phillip and I joined Mac to study the bird and observed that the white primary bar placement was correct for Lesser Nighthawk and took pictures. The bird was skittish and jumped out to seek a new perch. The bird flew circuits through the canopy and we lost it. A few minutes later, Erik Enbody spotted the bird and watched it land, and was able to pinpoint its perch, where it rested until we left it about 90 minutes later.
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 brownish nightjar with white mark near alula, white bars across the primaries, a white subterminal tail band, and rows of rusty markings on the primaries basal to the white primary bars. On the flying bird, the band of white across the primaries appeared to be far distal to where the primary coverts would end.



The flight photos, especially in the brightened version below, show that the inner primaries were heavily striped with rows of buffy spots running roughly parallel or concentrically to the main white primary band, and that the main band appeared fully white. The secondaries also showed rows of buff banding. The underparts of the bird appeared a light-medium brown, including the undertail coverts.





On the perched bird, upperparts were mottled with grays and browns, producing a bark-and-lichen-like pattern. The greater, median, and a rear row of lesser coverts were tipped broadly with paler color, buff on the greater and median coverts, whitish on the row of lesser coverts. The rows of spots formed by the tips of those feather tracts formed the triple wingbars that—if not outright diagnostic—are strongly indicative of Lesser Nighthawk. The scapulars were gray with pronounced buff stripes. The secondary tips were pale, perhaps rusty. A few irregular pale buff or rusty markings were visible on the banded primaries proximal to the bands. The white mark on the outer primary extended onto the outer web of the primary. The base color of the primaries was medium-dark brown, and visible primary tips appeared broad and rounded.



The throat patch of this bird was concealed. The underparts were an even pale brown with narrow, distinct and uniform bracket-shaped markings throughout, including the undertail coverts, although the bracket-barring of the undertail coverts was more focused and slightly more widely spaced than on the flanks and belly.

The tail showed regular, fairly widely spaced bars, with a white subterminal band.





The bill appeared blackish, the eye appeared to be dark brown. The eyelid feathering was buff.

16. Voice: Not heard.

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

The white mark near the alula eliminates nightjars other than nighthawks. Common Nighthawk is the more expected nighthawk and the main species to eliminate. The white tail band sexes this bird as a male; in male common nighthawk the undertail is white with less regular, sparser, and coarser barring. The presence of rows of buff and rusty markings on the primaries and secondaries also eliminate Common, as male Commons generally show only a faint trace of such a pattern, with faint small whitish markings. While the possibility exists that a western subspecies of Common Nighthawk might present a more Lesser-like appearance, the triple wingbar pattern in concert with the markings detailed above should rule in favor of Lesser.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Video and photos taken by many. Some of my still images are attached.

19. Previous experience with this species: Some out west, but low but regular density experience in Louisiana.

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

21. This description is written from: Mental notes, memory, and photo review.

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

23. Date: 5/3/2017

Time:

