

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: White-tailed Hawk, *Buteo albicaudatus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
1 in juvenal plumage
3. Parish: Cameron
Specific Locality: near mile marker 8 on Hwy 82; ca. 4 mi W of Johnsons Bayou
4. Date(s) when observed: 7 September, 2015
5. Time(s) of day when observed: about 8:30 in the a.m, until about 9:00 a.m.
6. Reporting observer and address: Paul E. Conover, Lafayette, LA 70506
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): none
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): Light was OK. Morning sunlight was still soft, very little in terms of heatwaves. Bird was to the south, but I maneuvered to a slight SW angle to get the sun in my favor.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss 10s, Nikon Fieldscope 20-60 zoom, Samsung S4 camera.
11. Distance to bird(s): about 600 feet according to Google maps.
12. Duration of observation: about .5 hours
13. Habitat: Coastal plain along a coastal ridge with scattered patches of remnant chenier woods but mainly marshy or low elevation plants such as Baccharis. Bird was perched in large old live oak skeletons.
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Resting, preening, appeared to fall off perch at one point.
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 chocolate brown and clean white hawk with long wings and long yellow legs. Upperparts solidly chocolate brown except as noted below.

Head chocolate brown with sparse but obvious pale whitish or grayish streaking on nape. Paler markings—appeared whitish—on sides of head: Auriculars pale with dark outline; eyeline pale beginning about even with posterior edge of eye then flaring slightly before ending abruptly at level of posterior edge of auricular; a small, smudgy, somewhat semicircular pale patch behind lower rear edge of auriculars. Eyes dark. Bill black, Typically Buteo bill in size and shape, black with cere/rear edge gray or bluish gray back to about front of eye.

Upperparts of body and wings chocolate brown with thin but distinct bay-colored edgings to wing coverts, indistinct bay patch on lesser coverts.

Underparts a mix of dark brown and clear white. Most obvious mark a clear white blaze running narrowly from chin and throat then widening down center 1/3 of breast onto a ground-color white belly mottled with dark markings. Sides of breast deep brown, with some light streaking onto edges of white blaze. The dark feathers of the sides of breast had clear white bases that showed distinctly as the bird preened.

Reticulated “belly band” composed of closely spaced dark semicircles, the dark tips of otherwise white feathers. Some of the central belly feathers were noted to have a matched pair of small spots proximal to the dark tip, while the flanks were seen to have narrow transverse barring proximal to dark tips.

Undertail white. Legs long, with bare yellow tarsi and feet. Leg feathering above tarsi white with small dark markings.

Tail from below appeared pale gray with slightly darker, very narrow transverse barring.

Underwings with white ground color, underwing linings with dark speckling on lesser coverts, white median coverts outlined by dark spots, secondaries and primaries narrowly barred. I only saw the bird perched, and only saw the underwings as it raised its wings a few times for no apparent reason. I didn't get good looks beyond this at the pattern of the flight feathers.

Wings long, primary tips extending markedly beyond tail tip.

16. Voice: Not noted

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): The bare legs rule out dark Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks, while the combination of features including dense brown dorsal color, dark breast with white blaze, underwing pattern lacking patagial mark, tail pattern and color, and long wings extending beyond tail

eliminate Red-tailed and Swainson's Hawks. Harris's eliminated by overall pattern, Common Black Hawk by tail pattern, Zone-tailed and Short-tailed by body pattern.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Yes, by me, attached.

19. Previous experience with this species: Pretty good. I've seen a couple in this plumage before, several others in more advanced plumage in the state, and some in Texas.

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

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation:

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	no, recorded
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

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

23. Date: 9/8/2015