

Species: Swallow-tail Kite
(Vernacular name)Elanoides forficatus
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

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Date (s): April 7 to April 30 Time Bird Seen: 7:30 AM to 8 to 9 AM April 2530Locality: Arapahoe County
Denver, Colo.

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: 1 - abr. eyes 2+3 dm. ex35If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: SorryNumber of birds seen: 1 Sex: Female Plumage: AdultLight conditions: 2) Sun Rise (or overcast)Distance from bird, and how measured: 1st abr. 400 YDS 2+3 Paced. 70ft.

Describe the bird's overall behavior: 1 st abr. was perched on top of cotton wood overlooking pond 100' in dist. Bird shows white at 400 yards, but to dark for white-tail kite. Kite was seen hovering hunting. Black trailing edge of wing w/ black Scissor tail seen >1 70 ft. Bird flew across 1-25. I spent 24, dry looking for male and nest site. Did not find

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: Wet meadow grass field with broken rain ponds. Area is now being graded for buildings.

Also looked for marsh & marshy did not find
Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Wife Pat. (Not birder)

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field. 1st obs. From Frontage Rd. along ~~lak~~ going N. from Inverness Park. Bird was perched looking north at very top of cottonwood at pond. I was about 400 yds. Heavy traffic could not stop! Bird looked like white-tail kite but at 400 yds to dark. Bird was 1. D. about 3 days later. Flying between 160 Inverness Dr. and 1-25 South. Kite was circling. I stopped and was surprised. Black Scissor tail, black trailing edge of wing. Body, neck, head white. Kite hovered like hawk but dandled. Last sitting was perched in cottonwood. Bird was in molt. Secondary wing feathers were missing. Could see some loose wing feathers, covers and secondary. Also some white rump feathers.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery--i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.: None.

Wings showing. Could not see blue bill as in Okla
Kite and black & purple sheer was not seen!!
Bill says kite was Cimarron about 22" long. T.P.P. of "hard"

List similar species and how you eliminated them: White-tailed Kite,
terns and Long-tailed jaeger.

to him. He was not shy. I walked up
to him to do so.

Prior experience with this and similar species: S1129 meat site
1243 near Afokas, Okla. to Site abr. Mexico
959. 1 site abr. 1962 or 13 Morgan City LA.

This report was written from notes made during ___ after ___ observation; from memory .

NAME (print): Ken Gamma

Mailing address: T-79 Bannockburn Franktown, Colo 80114

Signature:

Return to:

Hugh E. Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, Colorado 80206

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD

A

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: Swallow-Tailed Kite
(Vernacular Name)| Filaoctes forficatus
(Scientific Name)Date(s): May 24, 1983Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: AdultLocality: Intersection Colo 75 + Waterton Rd Elevation: @ 6000'Nearest town: Waterton (Kassler) County: JeffersonTime(s) observed: 10:15 A.M.Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): approx. 5 minutes - we were watching 2 distant subjects when they flew over - lower
Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):Attached

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers)

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

Some clouds, morning sun, bird overhead
Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): Binoculars (7x35, 8x40)Distance, and how measured: 800' - approximated one spotting scopeIf photographed, type of equipment and film: None

Who else photographed the bird?

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

Flying high overhead - truly swallow-like flight

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observe in the field:

Long, pointed wings - long swallow tail (wings pointed black + white - no shading - as though black stripes had been super-imposed on white bird. Top of bird and bill not seen - at least in the excitement they made no impression on me.

Description (continued):

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

trilled no sound

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

Foothills, a few nearby buildings, woodlands along
How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

checked kite page - no distinctive - some swallows in air
to compare size briefly - no similar species -

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

This was a new bird for me - for all of us - I have
seen the other U.S. Kites

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: Robbins, et al "Birds of N. America", Lane/Holt "A Field Guide to the Birds, Colo."

b) after observation: - Bailey + Medrach "Birds of Colorado" - Peterson's "Field Guide to the Birds" (also Texas guide), Bonyffrey handbook*

This report was written from reports made during _____, after observation from memory Date and time report was written: Copied from report earlier American Birds

Reporting observer: PATRICIA ECHELMEYER Signature: Patricia R. Echelmeier

Address: 2695 Newland St. Denver 80214

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to:

CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CITY PARK
DENVER, CO 80205

*from C. Chase's class.

Species: Swallow-Tailed Kite
(vernacular name)Elanoides Forficatus
(scientific name)

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Date (s): 5/24/83 Time Bird Seen: 10:30am to 10:45 am
Approx Actual viewing time 3-5 min.

Locality: East end of parking lot at east entrance to Ute Mountain Canyon near small pond.
Ute Mountain, Colorado, Jefferson County
Nearest town, County and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell 7x35 Binoculars + Bushnell Sentryte 20 x 50 Scope
If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: No photos taken

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Adult

Light conditions: Excellent Clear, sunny day, little or no wind.

Distance from bird, and how measured: Approx 200 to 250 yards

Describe the bird's overall behavior: When first spotted by a member of the bird class (Patti Echelmeyer Jefferson County Adult Ed - 15 members present and viewed bird and field marks confirmed by all 15 members), it was soaring to the East of us but not in line with the sun as it was more to the south. Someone said "it's a hawk with a forked tail." It was soaring at least 200' above ground near the hogback. Everyone tried to get it in their binoculars and succeeded. I decided I wouldn't try with the camera but would scope it. I had it in the scope for about 10 to 15 seconds before it flew

Soaring over riparian habitat & open grassland near foothills transition zone. Probably attracted by cliff ledge and thermal of hogback area.

The weather man had reported a strong upper air flow from Gulf of Mexico that day. Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Patti Echelmeyer, Arkansas Canyon, CO, Bobbye Frasier - all close members who have fanned in reports. They are all very experienced birders. Bobbye has had extensive experience in Texas birding also.

marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Hawk sized bird approximately 25". Forked tail very prominent and deeply forked. View I had in scope was very similar to the ~~ventral~~ view pictured on p. 151 of Peterson's new First of Rocker's guide except bird was in more vertical position with ~~the~~ ventral (under) side facing me. The black and white patterns were very clear in the scope. Black tail, black trailing edges of wings and white under parts and leading wing edges and white head. Bird had swallow-like flight. Did not hear it call. It did not land.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery--i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Taeger - is not black & white on wings. Tail very different
Terns - Tails are not black. Most smaller in size

Prior experience with this and similar species:

White-tailed Kite in Texas and also just happened to be one of the observers of the first ^{white-tailed kite} ~~seen~~ in Wyoming last Fall in the
This report was written from notes made during T after — observation; from memory —

NAME (print):

Mailing address: Ann H. Bonnell (Mrs. John H. Bennett)

6317 W. Wedder Dr., Littleton, CO 80123

Signature:

Phone 929-6211

Return to:

Hugh E. Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, Colorado 80206

Species: Swallow-Tailed Kite
(Vernacular name)Elanoides forficatus
(Scientific name)

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Date (s): May 24, 1983 Time Bird Seen: Approx. to 10:30 A.M.Locality: At Waterton, Colorado, just north of the Platte River. (Jefferson County)Nearest town, county and state:Optical equipment: Bushnell Center-Focus 9 x 36 Custom Binoculars

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: one Sex: _____ Plumage: adultLight conditions: Excellent. It was a lovely, sunny day.Distance from bird, and how measured: I estimate approximately 600 feet.

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

The bird was sighted soaring overhead. It appeared to me to be riding air currents in a graceful flight.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

The bird was flying over the Platte River area above Waterton, which is upstream 3 or 4 miles from Chatfield Reservoir. This would be a plains riverbed ecosystem adjoining the foothills to the Rocky Mountains.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):
Patricia Echelmeyer, 2695 Newland St, Denver Co 80204; Ann Bonnell, 6377 W. Geddes Dr.,

Littleton, Co. 80123; Barbara Livingston, 6337 W. Frost, Littleton, Co. 80123,
and approximately 10 other members of a group who were together that morning.

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

I saw a hawk-sized bird with a pure white body, black edges on extremely pointed wings, and a black deeply forked tail. From the distance I was observing the bird I immediately noticed the distinctive shape of the Swallow Tailed Kite, and the sharp contrast in the black and white color.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery--i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

No other falcon or kite with similar shaped wings has this coloration or this shaped tail.

Prior experience with this and similar species:
I have had no prior experience with the swallow-tailed kite. I have observed many Mississippi Kites which nested in the area where I lived in Texas for many years. As a birdwatcher for the past 9 years I am familiar with most of the common hawks and falcons of this area.

XXX

• This report was written from notes made during after observation; from memory .

Bobbye J. Frazier

Bobbye J. Frazier

NAME (print): 7779 South Marshall Street, Littleton, Colorado 80123

Mailing address:

Signature: Bobbye Frazier

Return to:

Hugh E. Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, Colorado 80206

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD

A

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: Swallow-tailed Kite
(Vernacular Name)*Elanoides forficatus*

(Scientific Name)

Date(s): 24 May, 1983Number of birds seen: one (1) Sex: unknown Plumage: adultLocality: Waterton - Chatfield recreation area Elevation: 5000' plusNearest town: Waterton County: JeffersonTime(s) observed: Approx. 10:30 A.M.Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 10 min. or more

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

Patty Echelmeyer's entire Adult Education birdwatching class - 15 observers

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers)

None that I know of.

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

Sun positioned nearly overhead & slightly to left of observers & bird... very bright with thin clouds randomly scattered. Bird circled many times beneath clouds - background
Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): sky alternately milky white & bright blue.
→ Zermatt 8x40 binoculars.Distance, and how measured: No point of reference, so it was impossible to judge distance.If photographed, type of equipment and film: —Who else photographed the bird? —

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

Bird was soaring at a fairly great height with 2 others - as the 3 soared lower and came toward me, I at first thought that all were hawks. However, as they came even nearer, it appeared to me that one of the "hawks" had had the center part of its tail shot away. Seconds later it became evident to me that this large bird had a very deeply notched, or "swallow-tail", & was very black & white.

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern.

Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observe in the field:

Bird appeared falcon-shaped, but larger than the Prairie Falcon, bird which I am familiar. It had approx. the wingspread of the Buteos Rough-legged and Ferruginous. It was very distinctly black & white, i.e. head, neck, & underparts extremely white, & all the rest visible from below very black. The most distinctive feature of the black tail was how long & deeply forked it was.

Description (continued):

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

No call heard.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

This bird was observed entirely in the air until it soared out of sight to the north.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Arctic, Common, Roseate, & Forster's terns all have white tails, & are much smaller....The barn swallow, of course, is considerably smaller. And I don't believe any of these birds commonly soar.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

None

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: Patty Echelmeyer, our teacher, had observed this bird before.

b) after observation:

Audubon Society Encyclopedia of No. American Birds - John K. Terres

This report was written from reports made during _____, after observation X from memory X
Date and time report was written: 28 May, 1982 - 9AM

Reporting observer: Pat Beran Signature: Patricia L. Beran

Address: 6047 Nixon St., Arvada, Co.

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to: CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CITY PARK
DENVER, CO 80205

Species: Swallow-Tailed Kite
(Vernacular name)10-83-25
Elanoides forficatus
(Scientific name)

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Date (s): May 24, 1983 Time Bird Seen: 10:30am to 10:45amLocality: Kassler (Jefferson County), Colorado

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Swift Binoculars 8 x ,40

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used:

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: unknown Plumage: Adult plumageLight conditions: few scattered clouds, blue skyDistance from bird, and how measured: Judging from the height of a telephone pole, I would say the bird was as close as 150 ft at one point.Describe the bird's overall behavior: The bird was flying in a circular pattern overhead and somewhat north of our group. It circled numerous times slowly and gracefully before heading to the west of us and out of sight.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Foothills/plains cottonwood river bottom

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

<u>Bobbye Frazier</u>	<u>7779 S. Marshall</u>	<u>Littleton, Colorado 80123</u>
<u>Ann Bonnell</u>	<u>6377 W. Geddes Dr.</u>	<u>Littleton, Colorado 80123</u>
<u>Patricia Echelmeyer</u>	<u>2695 Newland</u>	<u>Denver, Colorado</u>

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

The bird appeared to be large - hawklike - in size, but its shape and color pattern were distinctive and very unusual. It was observed with binoculars and by scope for 10-15 minutes. The wings were long and shaped like falcon wings; the tail was very long and split and spread much like a Barn Swallow spreads its tail in flight. The body and head were pure white as were the leading edges of wings, wrists, axillars, and wing linings. The tail was black and the trailing edges of wings were black. The head was rounded and hawklike.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery--i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Do not recall any calls or sounds.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Any of the terns which are of similar shape ruled out because:

1. overall size appeared larger than the terns
2. head and beak were definitely hawklike
3. color pattern was observed so clearly: body, head, front of wings-white; tail, tips and back of wings-black

Prior experience with this and similar species:

No previous experience with this species or any of the kites. I have identified the Forster's Tern, Royal Tern, and Black Tern.

This report was written from notes made during after observation; from memory X.

NAME (print): Barbara R. Livingston

Mailing address: 6336 W. Frost Dr.; Littleton, Colorado 80123

Signature: Barbara R. Livingston

Return to:

Hugh E. Kingery
869 Milwaukee Street
Denver, Colorado 80206