

2001-32

R = 9 Jun 01

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form (Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.) Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!
CFO-RC FILE X:

RESULTS:

Species:(Common Name) Common Black-Hawk (Scientific Name) *Buteogallus anthracinus*

Date(s) of occurrence: 4/14/01

Number of birds seen: one Sex: Unknown Plumage: Adult

Exact location: West on US 160 for 3.4 miles from Durango to Lightner Creek Road. 0.3 - 0.4 miles north on Lightner Creek Road (CR 207) from US 160. Briefly seen perched in tree along Lightner Creek behind the Hunt's Truck Sales @ 0.3 miles from US 160. The bird was viewed for a longer period of time @ 0.4 miles north of US 160 on Lightner Creek Road @ by some partitioned ponds that were formerly used for trout fishing. Here the bird perched low in a Ponderosa Pine on the far side of the ponds.

County: La Plata Nearest town: Durango Elevation: ~7,050 feet

Length of observation: 45 minutes Time(s) of observation: Between 9:05 AM - 9:50 AM.

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you:

Jim Beatty, Guy Tomberlin, Beverly Tomberlin, Mona Hill & Dean Hill

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s):

Peter Derven & John Waters saw the bird with the Tomberlins on 4/13/01.

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position:

Light conditions were good with the sun behind me.

Optical equipment used: Kowa TSN-2 with 20-60x zoom, Swarovski 7x42 binoculars

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted):

At the first location, the distance was about 60 meters, the bird was viewed from a distance of about 150 meters for the majority of the time.

Was bird(s) photographed? Yes If so, have you submitted photos? No

Who took the photographs? Dean Hill, Durango, CO

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred:

The habitat was riparian habitat along a creek interrupted with a couple of ponds. The general area is a river valley with scattered housing.

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification):

Initially the hawk was seen perched in various trees in the bottom of the canyon. The bird was seen flying, gaining lift and soaring.

Describe the bird in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include the overall size and shape and how you placed the bird in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird(s). Describe other important details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches or copy field notes):

General description of the bird: The bird was an almost entirely dark hawk. In flight, the bird had a very broad wing and a short, broad tail. On the underwing, a crescent-shaped window was visible at the base of the primaries on each wing. The trailing edge of the wing was outlined with a dark band.

Seeing the perched bird from the back and side, the bird looked two-toned. The head, back, and upperwing coverts were black with a slight grayish tone. On the folded wing of the perched bird, the outer primaries were visibly black; the inner primaries & secondaries were a light brown color with darker brown barring. (The brown coloration in addition to the black tones provided the 2-toned appearance that I mentioned above.) The underparts were also black.

Description of head: Color was black, the eyes were dark, lores were white, cere was yellow, and the tip of the bill was black.

Description of the tail: The tail had a thin, dingy-white terminal band; a broad, black subterminal band; and a broad, white band at the base of the tail.

Describe bird's call or song: No vocalizations were noted.

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them:

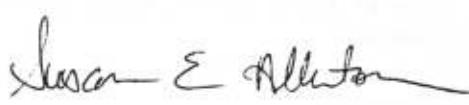
The Common Black-Hawk was easily sorted out from a few Turkey Vultures that were all soaring together with the Common Black-Hawk. The wings of the Common Black-Hawk were broader and shorter than those of the Turkey Vultures. The wings of the soaring Common Black-Hawk were held out flat rather than in the dihedral of a Turkey Vulture. Consequently, a Zone-tailed Hawk could safely be eliminated by the overall wing shape & flight of the bird. Additionally, the tail pattern and the underwing pattern (as described above) indicated Common Black-Hawk rather than Zone-tailed Hawk.

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation):

The National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America and The Sibley Guide to Birds were consulted to review the underwing pattern and tail pattern of Common Black-Hawk versus Zone-tailed Hawk. Both of these patterns (described above) correlated with the descriptions for Common Black-Hawk in the field guides.

This report is from notes made --- after Observation.

Date of written report: 5/5/01

Reporting observer: Susan E. Allerton Signature: 

Reporting Observer's Address: 61 Newland Circle

City: Durango State: Colorado Zip: 81301

Send report to: Colorado Birds Record Committee Tony Leukering P.O. Box 157 Arvada, CO 80001

Rec No. 18339 **↓Rec** **↓Bird** **C+S**

New **◀** **◀** **▶** **▶▶** **Del** **Enter**

2001-32

F/L Name start...

NGS-112 / G-76 / PW-179 / AMG(I)-232 /
BH-238 / PMX-PI. 5
Falconiformes / Accipitridae
AZ CA NV NM TX UT

Code CBHA

C Name Common Black-Hawk

S Name *Buteogallus anthracinus*

How many? **Date** 4/13/01

City Durango **St.** CO

Co. La Plata **Nation** USA

Place Lightner Creek

Habitat Wooded canyon/pond

Area ABA **Tag**

Notes

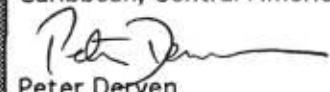
About 4 PM I received a call from Beverly Tomberlin that she and Guy had been observing a Common Black Hawk for two hours. When I arrived, John Waters, another very experienced naturalist had been watching this bird for over an hour. It was perched in a dead, fallen tree beside a small pond and eating one of the crawfish it had been catching. All black plumage appearing very dark brown in the full afternoon sunlight. Faint dark barring on the flight feathers. An obvious thick black terminal tail band below a single

More Notes

broad white tailband. The black tail band has a very thin terminal white edging, each feather just barely tipped with white. Legs were longish and bright corn-yellow. A black tipped yellow bill. White lores. No other yellow on the face. We observed the bird through 10X field glasses and a Kowa scope from 20 to about 40X for over twenty minutes after I arrived.

Realizing the desirability of a photo record, the only camera available was Beverly's point-and-shoot with a small telephoto capability. Through the view finder I realized I'd have to get closer to get anything visible at all. Approaching within fifty feet, the bird flew up into a higher cottonwood, showing nicely the short but very broad tail with its single white band and black terminal bands, broad black upperwings, silvery underwings in the shape the Sibley guide calls "commas." No picture, but a great look at the bird in flight. The bird had flown a hundred yards or so up Lightner Creek, paused in a cottonwood receiving the attention of crows. Half an hour later it returned to the original spot, snagged another crawfish which it ate, as John Waters put it, "like eating an ice cream cone." In all six observers (including the Tomberlin's neighbors) watched the bird hunt at the pond's edge, fly into the dead fallen pondside tree and feed, then fly away and return briefly.

I am quite familiar with this species having observed them in Arizona, Texas, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America and South America.


Peter Derven

P.S. I have encouraged the other
observers to send along their
narratives.