

10-93-55

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Species Reported: Red-Shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)

Report By: Jake Edge

Date and Time of Report: 4/9/93, 6:00pm

Report From: Memory

Location: Ireland Reservoir #5, North Dike, 49th Rd North of Hwy 52 near Hudson, CO

Date: 4/9/93

Time: 11:30am

Conditions: Sunny, warm, ~55 degrees F.

Observers:

Jake Edge, 3125 Folsom, Boulder, CO 80304 (303) 541-9374

John Vanderpoel, 4009 Troon Drive, Uniontown, OH 44685 (216) 699-0130

Raymond Davis, PO Box 481, Lyons, CO 80540 (303) 823-5332

Length of Observation: ~5 minutes

Optical Equipment: Bushnell 10x25 WA Compact Binoculars, Bushnell Spacemaster II

Scope with 22x WA Eyepiece

Experience with Species: None

I tentatively identified the bird as a Northern Harrier as it was flying towards us (North) from the south end of the reservoir. Upon further observation, I saw that it was the same approximate size as a Harrier, the tail was a bit shorter and the white 'butt spot' (upper tail coverts?, rump?) present on Harriers was not there, though the bird had the same overall dark appearance of the female Harrier. I started looking for other field marks, noting that the wings were wider (front to back) than those of a Harrier and the span was a bit shorter when compared to the body (and tail) length. We then noticed another hawk thermaling with the first. We started setting up the scopes while keeping the hawks in view. We immediately realized that both were the same species and started looking more closely at both hawks through the scopes. One of the individuals had a ruffled (pulled out further from the back of the wing) flight feather in the secondaries. Based on size and shape, we eliminated Sharp-Shinned and Cooper's Hawk. I started concentrating on the tail which was banded on the underside, a thin white terminal band, and several (4 or 5) black bands with the furthest out on the tail being slightly wider than the others (the bands may have been getting slightly thinner as they got closer to the body). The tail had a squared off end when not fanned. As the hawks spiraled up, I noticed that when the wings were backlit, a small area of sunlight would show through the wings in the primaries. The areas that lit up did not have a clearly defined shape and were not transparent, more translucent with some tan color to it. I saw this effect in both birds from both the top and the bottom.

After the hawks spiraled up into the sun and disappeared and I consulted the Peterson Field Guide to Hawks. It was obviously none of the normally occuring hawks for that area (Red-Tailed, Swainson's, Ferruginous, Rough-Legged) because of the length of the tail. I am not familiar with the Northern Goshawk in the field, but based on the illustrations and description in the guide, it clearly was not that species. The only other species that seemed possible from the guide was the Broad-Winged Hawk. Once again, I have no field experience with this species, but the illustrations and description do not match the bird that we saw. None of the plumages have the overall dark appearance.

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FIELD NOTES

Species reported: Red-Shouldered Hawk (Buteo lineatus)

Number of Individuals: One (1) female & one (1) male

Locality: Ireland Reservoir #5, North Dike, 49th Rd North of Hwy 52 near Hudson, Co

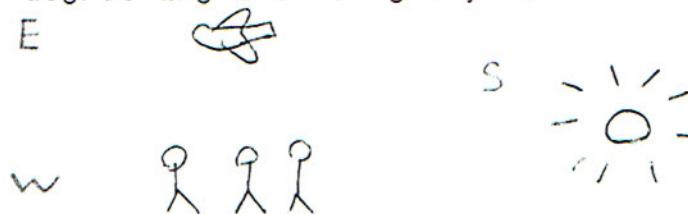
Date: 4/9/93

Time: 11:30 AM

Reporting observer: John Vanderpoel
4009 Troon Drive
Uniontown, OH 44685
216-699-0130

Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s): Raymond Davis
Jake Edge

Light conditions: Weather was warm, in the mid-60's with a light breeze out of the south. It was sunny and the sun was at a 90 degree angle or slightly behind us. (see diagram)



Optical Equipment: Zeiss 10 X 40B, Kowa TSN-4 with 20X to 60X zoom eyepiece, on 20X

Distance to birds: Initially 40 to 50 yards as the first bird rose from the reservoir, birds then soared directly over reservoir 100-200 yards above us for 5 or six minutes.

Duration of Observation: Six (6) to (7) minutes.

Description:

size- The female (initial bird) was the same size as a female Northern Harrier. The male (2nd bird) was smaller than the female, slightly larger than a male Northern Harrier.

head- Both birds had dark brown heads.

chest and belly- Both birds had overall dark chests with some barring. No real streaking.

wing- The wings of both birds were as long as the N.

Harriers we had seen that day, but they were wider and more buteo like. The female's wing seemed particularly long. Although their wings were wider than the N. Harriers we had seen they were not as wide as the wings of the Red-tails and Swainsons' which we had seen earlier in the day.

upper wing- The female's upper wing was brown with barring, uniform throughout. No rufous was observed on the upperwing coverts, however I only got one look while it banked and no looks with the Kowa. The male's upper wing was brown with barring Rufous on the upperwing coverts was visible in the Kowa on each of the three occasions that the bird banked. The rufous was not as pronounced as most of the Eastern Red-Shoulders that I have seen in Ohio, but clearly visible just the same. On one occasion I thought I could make out windows in the primaries of the upperwing, but my focus was on the rufous coverts.

under wing- The female's underwing was uniformly dark (underwing coverts equally dark as the flight feathers) except for the narrow translucent windows in the primaries. These windows were not particularly white just lighter than the rest of the underwing. The male's wing was more two-toned with the underwing coverts darker than the flight feathers. Narrow translucent windows were visible and more pronounced in this bird.

Neither bird showed a dark carpal patch nor a dark patagial bar.

Tail- Slightly longer and narrower than a red-tailed hawk. Both birds had a dark tail with narrow light bands (5 or 6 light bands on the female, 4 light bands on the male) No noticeable dark terminal band. (see sketch below)



Voice- Neither bird gave any call.

Previous Experience- I have experience with Red-shouldered Hawks having seen approximately one hundred in my life.

Texas - 4
California- 2
East - 60

In the last 6 months I've observed:

- Crane Creek, Ohio - March 25, 1993 - 5 adults
1 immature
- Santa Ana, Texas - Jan. 15, 1993 - 2 immatures
- Hawk Mountain, PA - Oct. 15, 1992 - 1 adult

I have field experience with both adult and immature Broad-winged Hawks as well.

Similar Species- I ruled out Red-tailed, Ferruginous and Swainson's by the fact that the tails of both subject birds were longer and narrowly barred. Our birds while buteo shaped were more slender in appearance than any of these three species and their wings were not as wide either. The chest and under wings were darker than any Red-tailed, Ferruginous, or Swainson's light morph. We had previously that day seen two dark morph red-tails to compare against and rule out quickly. These birds were certainly not dark morph individuals of any of the three prairie buteo species.

Although the female was initially identified as a female Northern Harrier by J. Edge, this was quickly ruled out by the lack of white uppertail coverts, the chunkier body appearance, and slightly thicker wings.

Both Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks were quickly ruled out as a result of the longer wings, narrow windows in wings, and lack of white undertail coverts. on our birds. N. Goshawk cannot be ruled out as quickly as the two smaller accipiters. Through previous communication with Larry Rosche, Red-shouldered Hawks and Goshawks are sometimes mistaken for each other. This warning is also issued in Dunne & Sibley. These birds didn't have the powerful chest of a Goshawk, lacked the white under tail coverts and were generally barred not streaked. They were also darker than Goshawks.

The one raptor that must be seriously considered and closely scrutinized is the Broad-winged Hawk. Broad-winged Hawks are smaller crow-size buteos. Please remember that both birds were N. Harrier size! (we had previously seen 8 Harriers and Edge initially identified the female subject bird as a female Harrier) Using the measurements in Clark & Wheeler the Red-shouldered Hawk is very similar in length and wing-spread to the N. Harrier while the Broad-winged Hawk averages 3" smaller in length and 6 to 10" in wing-spread.

	<u>Length</u>	<u>Wingspread</u>
N. Harrier	16-20 in.	38-48 in
Red-shouldered Hawk	15-19 in.	37-42 in.
Broad-winged Hawk	13-17 in.	32-36 in.
Crow	17 in.	30-34 in.

The tail of a Broad-winged Hawk is shorter and wider than a Red-shouldered Hawk. The barring on the tail is not only different but I feel diagnostic. I will never forget the first time I saw Broad-winged & Red-shouldered Hawks in the air together. I had been in Ohio less than one week when while birding at Deep Lock Quarry Metropolitan Park I heard a hawk scream overhead. Looking up I saw a pair of Broad-wingeds scolding a Red-shouldered as they all soared overhead. The most distinguishing field mark, the mark that really leapt out was not size, wing or tail shape, or degree of darkness, but the barring on the tail. The Broad-wing's tail has bold white bars. Actually the dark bars are equally wide but the effect that you get is the white. A Red-shoulder's tail appears dark overall with narrow light bars evenly interspersed.

Identification Aids: (List of books, illustrations, other birders used in identification)

At time of observation: none

After observation: Larry Rosche- Cleveland area birder

Peterson Field Guides - Hawks
William S. Clark & Brian K. Wheeler
Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston 1987

Hawks In Flight, Dunne, Sibley, and Sutton. Houghton Mifflin Company
Boston, 1988

This description is written from notes made between 12:15 PM and 1:00 PM on Saturday April 9, 1993. All notes were written prior to reviewing any field guides and thus should not have been influenced by any guide.

Conclusion: Both birds were Red-shouldered Hawks. The red shoulder patches I saw through the Kowa on the male are diagnostic. The initial bird was a female and the second individual was a male. This conclusion was based on the size difference, the initial bird being 10 - 15 % larger than the second bird. The second bird (male) was an adult bird. I think that the female was either an immature or in transition to adult. This would explain why I could not see the red shoulder patch on it, even through the Kowa, why its wings appeared so long, and why the narrow translucent windows on the wings were not as bold as the male's. Immature's have buff crescent windows rather than white.

Both birds were darker than the 6 Eastern Red-shoulders I had seen 2 weeks before at Crane Creek. I believe that these birds could have been either the Texas or California subspecies but they certainly could have been Eastern Red-shoulders. The last week of March and the first two weeks of