

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2013-05-02 13:46:22
Observer's Name	Chong Puan
E-mail	clpuan@yahoo.com
Phone	570-943-3411
Observer's Address	Street Address: c/o Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Acopian Center Street Address Line 2: 410 summer valley road City: orwigsburg State / Province: pa Postal / Zip Code: 17961 Country: United States
Names of additional observers	Joe Binder, New Ringgold, PA (report being filled out by L. Goodrich)
Species (Common Name)	Swallow-tailed Kite
Species (Scientific Name)	Elanoides forficatus
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	unknown
Observation Date and Time	04-28-2013 4:00 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
County	Schuylkill/Berks
Location (City, Borough, Township)	East Brunswick and Albany
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Hawk Mountain Sanctuary North Lookout
GPS coordinates of sighting	40.641247, -75.992446
Habitat	above forested ridge
Distance to bird	1000-2000 feet
Viewing conditions	high overcast skies, some wind
Optical equipment used	bushnell 10-x42
Description	A large pointed wing hawk in a glide with strongly forked tail and long narrow but slightly crooked wings. No color could be discerned due to overcast conditions and back lighting.

tail feathers moved slightly as bird moved forward as if using them for to negotiate wind. Not a barn swallow as much larger and steadier--definitely a raptor, and it was not a frigatebird, as the head and neck shape did not show such shape. The bird shape was exactly the shape of ST kite, wings kitelike in shape and a long forked tail. Bird never flapped but glided on winds along the ridge to NE. Second observer saw black color on tail feathers but was not sure of body color although it was lighter than tail color.

Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)

Bird observed in glide entire time of observation at a very high altitude, hard to see without binoculars if one did not know where to look. Using ridge updrafts to proceed to northeast it never flapped during the sighting. Second observer reported seeing tail feathers move slightly as if using them. A third observer tried to find the bird but got zapped by sun in eyes and it was gone before they could find it.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

Puan: Separating from other kites in eastern United States by general shape and forked tail. Mississippi Kite is smaller and does not have forked tail. Peregrine and harriers have long pointed wings but not a strongly forked tail. It was not a barn swallow as it was larger and steadier in flight, no flapping and steadier flight. Other raptors observed all day long so observer is familiar with size and behavior of soaring raptors at that altitude. Not osprey due to long forked tail and pointed wing shape.

Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

These notes are typed in by Laurie Goodrich. I had extensive discussion with the two observers and have some emails from the visitor-observer that I can share if you want them. I had Puan fill out this form which I then typed in here and where helpful I added notes from second observer", Mr. Joe Binder. Puan and he both saw clearly the long forked tail silhouette and were confident this was not a raptor that had just lost its central tail feathers as that would look differently in shape, with less tapering etc. And they both said the wing shape was kite-like. Joe Binder remarked on seeing the bird use its tail forks as if negotiating the wind currents to keep in its glide. I am confident they saw wa ST Kite after I discussed it with them.

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

Puan: Yes, the shape ws unmistakable and really different from other soaring raptors that I have observed over the last month at Hawk Mountain .

During

Hawks In Flight, Dunne, Sibley, Sutton.

After

Crossley guide to raptors. Crossley, Liguori, and Sullivan.

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