

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2019-12-03 13:09:51
Observer's Name	Connor Vara
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Phone	7162258586
Observer's Address	1413 Rt 20 Apt. F22 Silver Creek NY 14136 United States
Species (Common Name)	Snail Kite
Species (Scientific Name)	<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	Immature
Observation Date and Time	10-22-2019 4:10 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	https://ebird.org/checklist/S60849973
County	Erie
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Erie
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Presque Isle State Park-Thompson's Bay
GPS coordinates of sighting	42.166917, -80.082927
Habitat	Shallow water, Scrub-shrub on the outer perimeter of small inland wetland.
Distance to bird	50-75ft
Viewing conditions	Overcast, windy
Optical equipment used	Eagle optics 8x42 binoculars and a Canon 7d Mark II with a 70-200mm f/4L was used for photos

Description

I first observed the kite as I arrived to my waterbird monitoring locations to count all waterbird species present in Thompson's Bay. When I arrived to the spot and looked up, I noticed a low flying, medium sized raptor with a heavily streaked chest, belly and flanks, light colored head and a long slender, curved bill. Once I got my camera the kite was perched low about 50ft away from me and this where I noticed the black eyeline, light brown head with black streaks on neck leading down, slightly orange legs, white rump patch, and long, slender curved bill.

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

First noticed flying/kiting above me on the shoreline then I ran to get my camera and was then found perched about 5-10ft off the water on a overhanging branch above a small inland wetland (shallow water and not large) looking around. After about 20 seconds of observing and photographing, the kite took off south towards Beach 11 and was not seen again.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

The only other raptor I thought it could've have been was a northern harrier due to size, flight pattern, and having the white rump patch but the heavy, black streaking and curved bill are not characteristics of a NOHA. Also for a second I though it may have been a Rough-legged hawk due to pale colored head, smaller size, similar underwing plumage and the larger black belly band but RLHA do not have slender curved bill and orange legs. RLHA also have feathered tarsus and the bird I observed did not possess that.

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

After the photos were taken I called my boss (Executive Director for Erie Bird Observatory) Sarah Sargent and told her what just happened with confidence it was a SNKI and sent her back of camera pictures for her to look at as well as send them to Jerry McWilliams to confirm. Within about 30-60minutes Jerry as well as several others met at Horseshoe Pond and talked about the encounter and went to relocate the kite with no luck.

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

Yes! Photos were taken and the photos were seen and approved by many birders as well as many key photos of field marks taken and reviewed by Jerry McWilliams

During

Sarah Sargent, Jerry McWilliams, Laura-Marie Kotisch

After

Jerry McWilliams

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Upload images, audio, video or drawings

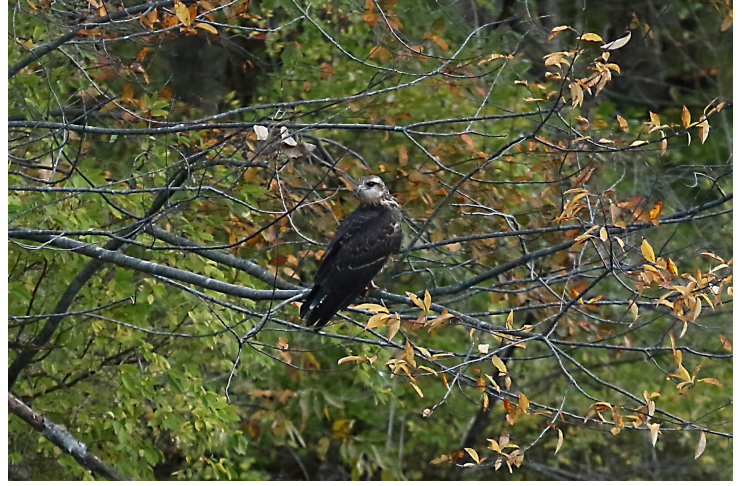
[SNKI_Flying.JPG](#)



[SNKI_Flying2.JPG](#)



[SNKI Perched.JPG](#)



[SNKI Perched2.JPG](#)