

24 April, 1999

Randy C. Stringer
409 Shady Dr.
Grove City, PA 16127-1925

Dear Randy,

Thank you for submitting documentation on the Mississippi Kite you saw in Grove City on 12 July, 1997. After careful review we regret that we are unable to accept this record. The committee felt that the description was too brief in detail for an adequate determination to be made (e. g., the wing pattern is never actually described). This does not mean of course that the bird was not a Mississippi Kite, merely that the details did not allow for a definite determination.

We hope that this does not discourage you from submitting documentation on any rare birds you find in the future. Please be encouraged to send as much detail as possible when submitting a report.

Sincerely,

For the Committee,
Roy A. Ickes, Chairperson

Record # 171-01-1997

On the early evening of July 12th, my wife and I walked along Enterprise Road- just one half mile from our home. As is my custom, I am attuned to birds by both sight and sound.

Around 6:12 p.m. we both watched a slim raptor circling just over the tree tops at about one hundred feet or less. The temperature was in the lower 80's and the wind was light- coming out of the southeast. Both of us had noticed the large number of dragonflies and chimney swifts in the sky, seemingly, all around the vicinity.

The raptor was arcing a bit in a tight circle and, at first, appeared to be a Sharp-Shinned Hawk- based upon size alone. Closer examination revealed a kite-like appearance with long, lean sling-blade wings and a fairly long tail.

A direct view right above us clearly showed a dark grayish coloration against a barred tail. Without warning, the bird dodged incoming Chimney Swifts which were darting right in its path. The bird collapsed at the sudden gust of swifts and began to "dance" in the sky to avoid the intruders. It juked from the swifts and acted like a nighthawk in its maneuvering.

It proceeded to give chase and capture a dragonfly from among the myriad of ones in the area. My sight and behavioral observations told me we were viewing a Mississippi Kite. After living in Jackson, Mississippi and Dyersburg, Tennessee for a combined total of six years, this versatile and agile raptor is an old friend.

I believe we observed the kite for about ten minutes as it displayed its aerial prowess before dashing off to the southeast. The plumage suggested a sub-adult male. (Another sub-adult had been seen earlier in the month close to the southeast PA line in Delaware; with still another sighting of this species in Maine- earlier in late June).

Anyone familiar with the Mississippi Kite knows that it is, by nature, a wanderer. I have found this species in Arizona along narrow river edges; migrating through western Oklahoma across vast open stretches by the hundreds; careening the Mississippi River levees in loose flocks; and even moving through eastern Tennessee in late August- out of its nesting range in a migratory perusal.

I am positive of my identification with 100% certainty. The combination of size, wing pattern, feeding habits, tail pattern and overall body color and shape lead me to conclude its identify of a Mississippi Kite.

171-01-199
10-121

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

Date of Sighting: 12 July 1997 to 12 July 1997

Location: GROVE CITY

County: MERCER

Observer(s): Randy Stringer

Date of Submission: 1997

Submitted by: Randy Stringer

Written Description: YES

Photo: NO

Specimen: NO

Recording: NONE

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas			X					
P. Schwalbe				X				
K. Parkes				X				
R. Ickes						X		
P. Hess				X				
J. McWilliams			X					
T. Floyd			X					
TOTALS			3	3		1		
DECISION				X				

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

4-19-99