

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2015-09-28 16:55:25
Observer's Name	Laurie GOODRICH
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Phone	5709433411
Observer's Address	Street Address: 410 summer valley road Street Address Line 2: acopian ctr City: orwigsburg State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 17961 Country: United States
Names of additional observers	none
Species (Common Name)	Mississippi Kite
Species (Scientific Name)	<i>Ictinia mississippiensis</i>
Number of individuals	1
Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)	unknown
Observation Date and Time	09-25-2015 10:40 AM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
County	Berks
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Albany Township, Eckville
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	Hawk Mountain Sanctuary
GPS coordinates of sighting	40.626636, -75.968135
Habitat	flying above the forest over the Ridge
Distance to bird	1 to 2 miles
Viewing conditions	hazy but visibility 30 km
Optical equipment used	Swarowski 10x 42 EL, and Swarowski 65 mm, 20-60 zoom telescope

Description	I first saw two birds soaring together several hundred feet above the ridge to the south of us, Pinnacle area. One was clearly a broadwing, the other was similar size but long narrow wings. While I watched with binoculars, the second bird began flapping with deep flaps reminding me of harrier flaps, languid, not hard like falcon. It flew up above the other bird and away from it, and swooped as if catching an insect. I quick got scope on bird and watched it flap and swoop up and then drop down to just above trees at Owls Head, as if grabbing something unseen from air. It was silhouetted in bright sky so never saw any color or shading. Wings pointed and narrow, flight swooping and turning quickly, wings held flat not dihedral like harrier, when not swooping. Flight was not harrier or falcon like.. falcon is stiff hard flapping, this was loose. At one point it joined a Turkey Vulture, and it was smaller than vulture. It was constantly moving the entire time and last seen moving south above ridge. It changed altitude from 300 feet or more high to just above ridge at eye level but at least 1 mile out quickly and always swooping down and up. I never got look at tail shape because of its constant movement.
Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)	see above, swooping to presumably catch insects, it would hang head down for second or two after a swoop perhaps to eat. Flaps were very deep with wings high over the body then down below body, but not fast forward flight like a peregrine but loose like harrier. when held wings out to glide or soar, they were flat.
Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)	It was flying with a broadwing at first and later beside a turkey vulture, this helped me determine size and that it was not a buteo or accipiter and was not a small falcon as body and general size similar to broadwing generally. Wings long and narrow in shape. Not a harrier as the wing profile in glide was flat not in dihedral. We had two harriers earlier in day. Behavior and flapping eliminated peregrine, peregrines have strong powerful flap and move fast when flapping. This bird moved with great agility but did not show much speed in flapping away. The swooping down and quick down and up again patterns was distinctly kite-like to me having seen them in Mexico many times. I kept watching to see if I could see the tail or wing shape distinctive to Mi Kites but the bird was very far away and was constantly moving about once I got the scope on it, so I never got a chance to examine the profile well enough to see these features.
Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:	I have seen many Mississippi Kites in Veracruz Mexico over the years. I have never seen a harrier or peregrine behaving like this bird. I have seen peregrines hunting over the lookouts on migration but usually they pursue a prey through the air or if the grab something it is once and done. This bird swooped again and again up , diving down and swooping up and swooping down and turning up.
Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)	yes. I eliminated other possible species based on flight behavior.
During	none
After	Jerry Ligouri Hawks at a Distance;
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