

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2020-05-27 14:35:51
Observer's Name	David Barber
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Observer's Address	Acopian Center 410 Summer Valley Road Orwigsburg PA 17961 United States
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)	adult in breeding plumage
Observation Date and Time	05-12-2020 3:20 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Not yet (please do, eBird is great!)
County	Schuylkill
Location (City, Borough, Township)	East Brunswick Township
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	North Lookout, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary
GPS coordinates of sighting	N 40.641756, W 75.991402
Habitat	rock outcropping on ridge top
Distance to bird	10 meters
Viewing conditions	partly cloudy, bird was back lit.
Optical equipment used	Swarovski 8.5x42 EL
Description	Similar in size to a small peregrine falcon. Long, narrow, pointed wings, 10th primary was substantially shorter than 9th primary, long, narrow, flared tail (ie., was more narrow where it met the body and wider at the end of the tail), outer retrices were squared off, tail was black with no markings, underwing appeared dark, slim body with gray belly and chest, head was a light gray, much lighter than body.

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

The bird was flying away from when observed. Very buoyant, fluttery flight interspersed with gliding, similar to a nighthawk.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

Similar in shape and flight to a common nighthawk, but much larger with gray body, light gray head and black tail, short 10th primary and lacks the white stripe in the wing of a nighthawk.

Separated from american kestrel due to size and merlin due to size, narrow wings and buoyant flight. Had slimmer, more narrow wings, than peregrine falcon. Also had a more slender appearance where peregrines are more stout. The tail was narrower and flared, whereas the tail on a peregrine is more rounded, and not narrow. Ventral side was solid grey with no barring on chest, lacked the dark malar patch of adult peregrine. 10th primary was substantially shorter than 9th. Finally the buoyant flight is very different from powerful direct flight of a peregrine.

Separated from male harrier, didn't have black wingtips of male harrier and the tail was black and flared, no white rump patch and the wings were narrow and pointed. 10th primary was substantially shorter than 9th. The gray chest and belly with lighter gray head different from lighter body and dark crown found in male northern harrier.

Separated from swallow-tailed kite because it lacked the long forked tail and white chest and belly of a swallow-tailed kite. Separated from white-tailed kite because of the black tail, gray body, light gray head and short 10th primary

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

Yes, I am very familiar with this species. I have seen dozens while conducting field work in Texas and have seen over 1000 during migration when I visited the Veracruz River of Raptor watchsite.

During

none

After

Hawks from every angle by J. Ligouri

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