

PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date	2020-07-15 14:27:16
Observer's Name	Jason Waanders
E-mail	jason.waanders@gmail.com
Phone	6106644231
Observer's Address	505 Baird Rd Merion St PA 19066 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)	Probable First Summer
Observation Date and Time	06-02-2020 12:10 PM
Did you submit this sighting to eBird?	Yes
Link to eBird checklist	https://ebird.org/checklist/S69972835
County	Montgomery
Location (City, Borough, Township)	Merion Station
Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)	505 Baird Road
GPS coordinates of sighting	40.0031x-75.2560
Habitat	Suburban yard (flyover)
Distance to bird	100-200 yards
Viewing conditions	Overcast, with diffused glare from noon sun coming through
Optical equipment used	Swarovski EL 10x42 Binocular
Description	Circling over yard, not too high. Spotted it while returning from run; it stayed long enough for me to go in and get bins. Not a full adult—faint fine white bands in tail. Otherwise just appeared all dark, no finer plumage details visible in overcast noon sky. Clear kite profile with long pointed gull-like wings, fairly long flared tail with square corners.

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

Soaring without flapping, moving in slow circles (which gave me enough time to run inside to get bins) but overall heading northwest.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

All-dark raptor with long narrow wings and flared square-edged tail, with a few fine/thin white bands visible upon careful inspection of the tail. Just going by profile alone, wings were too narrow and pointed for a buteo or accipiter, and tail was not right for a falcon. While wings were quite gull-like, tail shape and pattern rule out any sort of dark gull (not that any gull that dark could be present here anyway). Moving to plumage--though the light was too poor to see fine details of color, the bird was close enough to see that it was all dark, with the only white/light markings being those bands in the tail. I can think of no other diurnal raptor that could be here and would be all dark like this (profile and proportions clearly ruled out an eagle, not to mention vultures and black corvids).

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

I recall that several other sightings of this species were also reported to eBird in Montgomery and other nearby counties within a week or two of this sighting.

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

Yes. I know the marks against this sighting are the lack of a photo and the not-ideal light conditions. That said, the bird was pretty close and I had a reasonably long look through binoculars. I'm quite confident of the details of the profile and plumage noted above.

During

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After

Same

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