

October 28, 2004

J. R. George  
550 Kendy Drive  
Manheim PA 17545

Thank you for submitting the written description of the Swainson's Hawk from Second Mountain 13 October, 2002. The majority of the members of the committee felt that the description lacked sufficient details to place the record in Class III; an accepted sight record documented by one observer. This of course does not mean the bird was mis-identified, in fact, the committee's most experienced hawk watcher felt the description was quite accurate in terms of shape and size or "jizz", perhaps the most important criteria for identifying migrating hawks.

Identifying migrating hawks is as much art as science. Unfortunately the art is often lost when translated into written description. I have little doubt the bird was something other than a Swainson's but for the purposes of documentation, subtle distinctions in shape or size should ideally be further supported by plumage details. It was the lack of such details that most members cited for placing the record in Class IV-A or IV-B. Do bear in mind that regardless of how the record is categorized it is still a useful piece of the permanent record.

Many thanks for taking the time to submit the description  
Sincerely

Matt Sharp  
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

186-01-2002

# State/Regional Bird Records Committee

## Rare Bird Report Form

Species: Swanson's Hawk (dark ph) Date: 10 13 1002

Number-Age-Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: 11:04 to 11:06

Location: Second Mountain Hawk Watch

Habitat: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather Conditions: Overcast

Distance: 300 m

Optical Equipment: Zeiss 10x40B

Photographs Taken?: Yes:  No:

Other Observers: Tom Power 162 Tice Lane  
Lebanon Pa 17042 717 273-4512

Name	Address	Phone	e-mail
<u>Richard Pohner</u>	<u>77 Fox Rd</u>	<u>717 626-2690</u>	
	<u>Newmanstown Pa 17073</u>		

Name	Address	Phone	e-mail

Name	Address	Phone	e-mail

Name	Address	Phone	e-mail

Name	Address	Phone	e-mail

Name	Address	Phone	e-mail

Experience of main observer: 20+ years hawk watching inc official counter  
@ Cornwall Tower Hawk Watch, Hawk Mtn Sanctuary,  
2nd mtn Hawk watch.

Date Description Written: 10 13 2002

Description of Sighting: (include size, shape, color patterns, song, call notes, behavior, and other diagnostic characteristics, but only what was actually observed in the field. Attach sketches, photographs, and additional sheets, if necessary.)

Bird accompanied by Cooper's hawk. Extremely large wings suggesting M. kite or N. Harrier. No light markings were discernable. Other birds such as Sharp-shin or Cooper's showed color & light markings. Bird was soaring. When it moved on it pulled its wings back and resembled a red-tail.

Wings held straight out, no crook, when soaring.

Similar Species / How Eliminated:

Red-tail - Wings too long and narrow for red-tail  
Harrier - body a bit too heavy, tail much shorter.  
Peregrine - Wings very pointed at times but bird more  
Beasto-like.

Name: J R. George Signature: J. R. George Date: 10/3/02

Address: 550 Kendig Dr  
Manheim Pa 17545

Mail this form along with accompanying (stapled) materials to:  
Address of Committee inserted here.

Porc

# Eric - Below is the description of the Swainson's

Bird seen late in afternoon, heading EAST, appeared to be looking for roost and at about 300 yards appeared to go in for the night.

Initial view was about 150 yds - I was using 10x50 Bushnell Customs. maybe 200 yds

Revise Document 3 3Ins 3 3 3Pg 1  
ANALYSIS.DOC 3T'style 86 12p 3Blk3Ln 140  
F2=End/Save F4=Block F5=Functions F6=Search F7=Format F8=Instructions  
.....2.....3.....4.....6.....7.....8...../  
south-southeast wind brings the clouds and the small birds. 218 Sharpies and 27 Kestrels, the latter a season high count, pass by accompanied by 9 Cooper's. 14 Harriers and 10 Ospreys also join the parade. An immature RT dives into the trees flushing a screaming Bluejay from the canopy. Four Red-breasted Nuthatches are observed in the trees below. A Red-headed Woodpecker roller-coasters past. A Kestrel sans tail passes too. A large number of Monarchs are also seen passing today.

10/13/90 - A "harrier" appears close off the south side and below us with its wings in the long upward tilt. Upon examining the bird we see the tail is too short and the white patch is actually on the sides and below the tail. It is not a rump patch a la Harrier but white at the sides and below the base of the tail a la some Red-tails. The bird makes a few very slow flaps, like those of a Great Blue Heron. The bird is identified as a Swainson's Hawk. The 13th is not an unlucky day.

10/15/90 - Chimney Swifts are still flying. An immature Golden Eagle passes low at 100 yards at 12:26. A Merlin is also tallied for the day.

## Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

### Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

Date of Sighting: 13 October 2002 to 13 October 2002

Location: Second Mountain Hawkwatch

County: LEBANON

Observer(s): J. R. George, Tom Power, Richard Pohner

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: J. R. George

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead					X			
D. Heathcote					X			
P. Hess					X			
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer				X				
R. Leberman			X					
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS			2	2	3			
DECISION					X			

Comments: 2/5

note description is dated 10/3/02 - not 10/13

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 6/12/03