

RARE BIRD Report Form

This form is a required attachment to the RTPHW Daily Count Sheet when reporting RARE or UNUSUAL bird sightings at RTPHW.

SPECIES

Common Name: Swainson's Hawk

Scientific Name: Buteo swainsoni

Subspecies (if known) _____

REPORTING OBSERVER

Name: Jim Lockyer

Address: 35 Letitia Lane

City: Media, PA

Email: jim@jl-studio.com

Other observers (only those who saw and identified the bird with you): Charles Smith

SIGHTING DETAILS

Date of Observation: 10/13/2008 Time: 12:45 EDT

Location (city, borough, township): Media, Upper Providence Township, Delaware County

Exact Site (e.g. name of park, lake, road): Rose Tree Park (Rose Tree Park HawkWatch)

Number of Individuals: 1 Sexes: not sexed

Age(s) and Plumage(s) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; state of molt if applicable):
Juvenile (intermediate or dark phase)

Distance to Bird: The bird was a migrating "naked-eye" raptor coming in low and rising to a moderate height

Viewing Conditions (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you): Heavy overcast skies and the bird remained primarily backlit during the observation period.

Habitat: (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details): The bird was flying over a mowed open park area. The park is interspersed with mixed deciduous wooded areas.

Behavior (describe in detail what the bird was doing): The migrating raptor was picked up in a sky scan with 10x binoculars approaching the hawk watch from the ENE flapping, gliding, and soaring. The bird remained in view for 10-15 minutes

Vocalizations (if any): No vocalizations were heard.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Include as much detail as you can recall - "jizz" (general overall feeling about the bird), size, colors, patterns, bill and leg proportions - all relevant features!

SEE ATTACHED DESCRIPTION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Optical Equipment Used: 10x Nikon binoculars and a 30x Nikon fieldscope were utilized to observe the bird

Supporting Evidence (if any)

Photograph: _____ Video: _____ Audio Tape: _____ Drawing: X

This form must accompany the RTPHW Daily Count Sheet when reporting RARE or UNUSUAL bird sightings at RTPHW.

Please use the back of this form or additional sheets of paper if more space is required.

This form was adapted from the PA Ornithological Records Committee Form. It is encouraged that a completed copy of this form be submitted to the PA Ornithological Records Committee. c/o Nick Pulcinella, PORC Secretary, 613 Howard Road, West Chester, PA 19380

RARE BIRD REPORT - Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

REPORT SUBMITTED BY: Jim Lockyer - jim@jl-studio.com - 610-565-2873

SIGHTING DATE/TIME: Monday, October 13, 2008 – 12:45 EDT

LOCATION: Rose Tree Park HawkWatch, Media, Delaware County, PA 19063

WEATHER: Heavy overcast skies

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This bird was first picked up on a sky scan (10x binoculars) while searching for migrating fall raptors at Rose Tree Park HawkWatch (RTPHW). The bird was relatively low and heading directly towards the hawk watch coming in from the ENE. The bird was displaying deep wing-flaps and on the initial sighting and the distant bird was first thought to be a possible Red-shouldered Hawk (RSHA) doing its "accpiter wing-flap." As the bird came closer the deep and methodical wing beats looked more *harrier-like* than the wing-flap of a RSHA. This birds wingbeats were noted to be more methodical and steadier than that of a harrier.

As the bird continued to come closer (now being observed with a 30x scope) and circled it was obvious that this bird was a large buteo and one that was distinctly different from the expected buteos that normally migrate through RTPHW. This bird had a slender body, a long-tail appearance when the tail was not fanned, and very distinctive long pointed wings. Under the heavy overcast skies it was difficult to pick up any distinctive field marks at this point and the bird looked dark overall. As the bird continued heading towards the hawk watch it periodically flapped, glided, and soared. In the FLAPPING behavior the bird demonstrated a deep, methodical, and steady wing beat. In the GLIDING behavior the bird displayed a slight "M" shaped configuration similar to an Osprey. In the SOARING behavior the bird exhibited a dihedral posture while soaring.

I knew I was familiar with this bird having grown up in the west but it had been years since I had seen my last and finally all the puzzle pieces gelled. It could only be a Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) based on the "distinctive" profile of the Swainson's Hawk – LONG relatively narrow POINTED WINGS, SLENDER BODY, LONG-TAILED appearance when the tail was closed and by the flight behavior exhibited by the bird. Having been more familiar with adult Swainson's Hawks that display a definite light-dark under-wing contrast delayed my early call on this bird but allowed more time to scrutinize this bird in detail. This bird was observed under a heavy overcast sky and for most of the observation time (10-15 minutes) the bird was being observed under backlit conditions. I began concentrating on finding noticeable field marks (still observing through a 30x scope) as the bird made its closest approach.

There was no definitive light-dark contrast of under-wing color on this bird. The bird appeared to be dark overall but not excessively so. The view of the under-tail when spread was light in color and showed no distinctive banding. The most prominent field mark noted was a heavy streaking (splotching) on the upper breast of the bird and the light colored bib and darkish head. Based on these observations I identified the bird as a dark phase juvenile Swainson's Hawk. In hindsight, I believe the bird to probably be an intermediate phase juvenile Swainson's Hawk since the primary field marks noted (dark streaked breast, light bib, and dark head) would probably not be as apparent on a dark phase juvenile which would more consistently dark overall.

Other expected eastern buteos (Broad-winged and Red-tailed Hawk) were never considered candidates for this sighting since this bird was uniquely different from both those species and never exhibited any of the flight behavior of either. On initial sighting of this bird it was briefly thought to be a Red-shouldered Hawk but that belief was quickly dismissed as the bird approached and exhibited its own unique flight behavior and profile.

No references were used during the observation period of this bird since the intent was to collect as much visual information and notes possible. I was hoping that this bird which initially was heading directly towards us would get close enough to at least obtain a silhouette photo image (the best to be expected under the poor lighting conditions) for the record. However the bird catching a thermal before coming directly overhead began to drift off to the southwest.

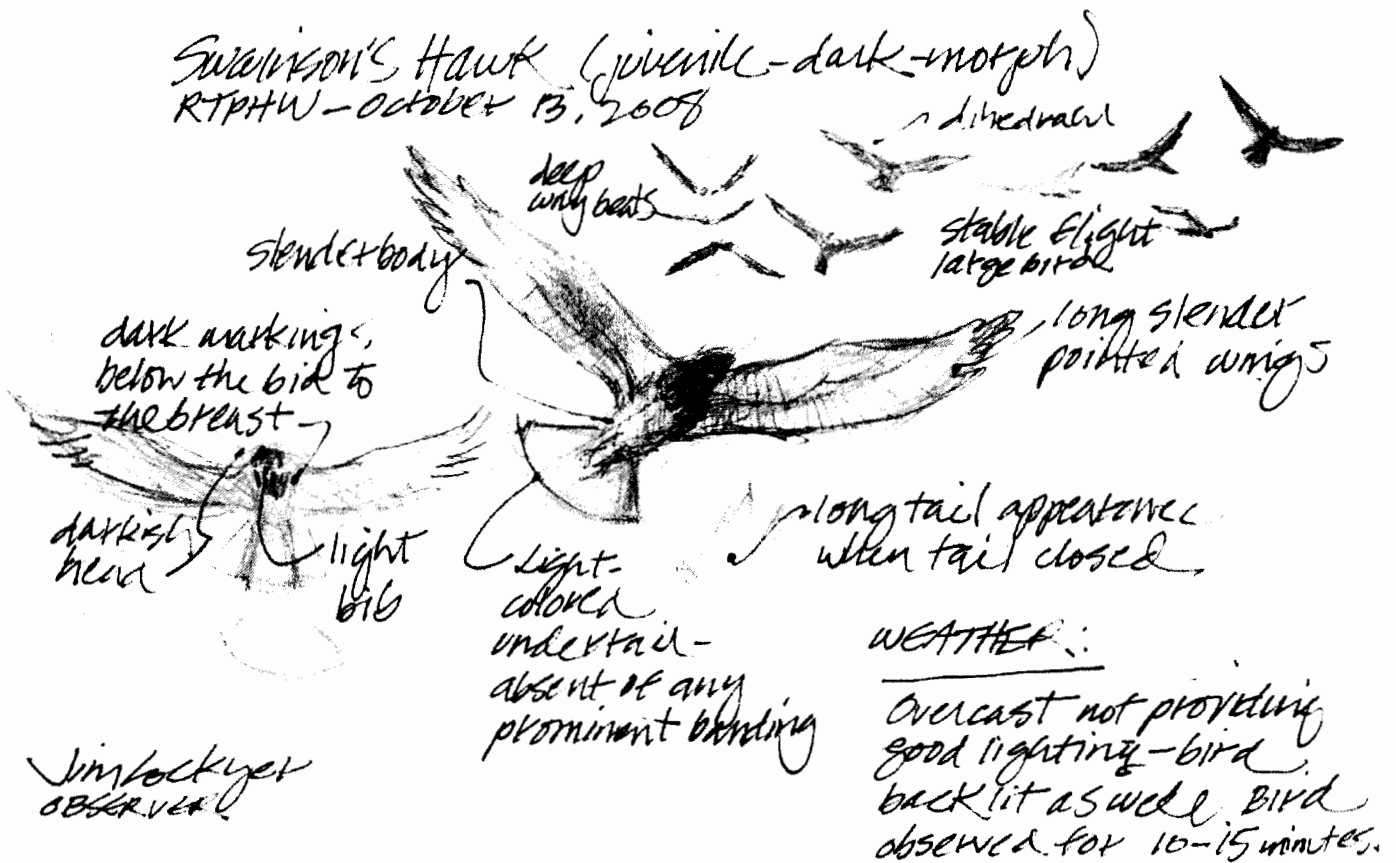
The reference utilized immediately after observing this bird was *Hawks From Every Angle* by Jerry Liguori. Interestingly Liguori cautions the reader on *the lack of two-toned contrast underneath on juvenile Swainson's in backlit conditions* in his opening paragraph on the Swainson's Hawk.

Other references used following the sighting but, not immediately after the sighting were: *Raptors of Eastern North America*, Wheeler; *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, Sibley.

I am quite confident based on the unique and distinctive profile, flight characteristics, and field marks of this bird that it was a juvenile Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*). I am however not confident with regards to the color phase of the bird.

ATTACHMENT:

Swainson's Hawk sketches and notes made immediately following the sighting of this bird on Monday, October 13, 2008.



Sketch and Notes by Jim Lockyer – Monday, October 13, 2008



Jim Lockyer- *jl-studio*

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Friday, October 23, 2008

PA Ornithological Records Committee (PORC)
Nick Pulcinella, Secretary
613 Howard Road
West Chester, PA 19380

Nick,

I am submitting the completed PORC Rare Bird Report Form, sighting account statement, and sketches for the sighting and observation of a juvenile Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) at the Rose Tree Park HawkWatch (RTPHW) on Monday, October 13, 2008.

I submit these materials to the PORC membership for their discussion and consideration. Should any additional materials or questions be required please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jim Lockyer

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round Two

Species: Swainson's Hawk Buteo swainsoni

Date of Sighting: 13 October 2008 to 13 October 2008

County : DELAWARE

Location : ROSE TREE PARK HAWKWATCH

Observer(s): Jim Lockyer

Date of Submission: 2008

Submitted by: Jim Lockyer

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

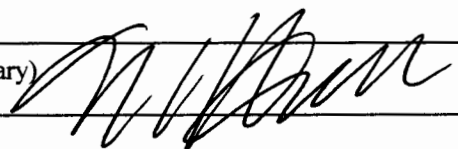
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut			X					
A. Guarente			X					
T. Johnson				X				
B. Coulter			X					
C. Rutt K. Fryberg			X					
J. Heller			X					
G. Malosh			X					
TOTALS			6	1				
DECISION			X					

Comments: 6/1

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

9/24/09

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Swainson's Hawk Buteo swainsoni

Date of Sighting: 13 October 2008 to 13 October 2008

County : DELAWARE

Location : ROSE TREE PARK HAWKWATCH

Observer(s): Jim Lockyer

Date of Submission: 2008

Submitted by: Jim Lockyer

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut				X				
A. Guarente			X					
T. Johnson			X					
B. Coulter			X					
C. Rutt				X				
J. Heller			X					
G. Malosh			X					
TOTALS			5	2				
DECISION								

Comments: 5/2 GO TO 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary)

Date: