

October 28, 2004

Dr. Donald A. Bryant
104 Nea'Yu'Ka Street
Port Matilda PA 16870

Your documentation of the "Krider's" Red-tailed Hawk at Stone Mountain 21 October 2002 has the committee split 4-3. There was unanimous opinion however that the description was superbly written and precise. Committee members who voted to place the documentation in Class IV-A; a record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of the observer's identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt, cited the difficulty of assigning subspecies names to birds in the field. This is especially true for such a highly variable species as Red-tailed Hawk is, one that not only shows geographic variation but which also occurs in a variety of color morphs and is relatively frequently seen with plumage anomalies such as leucisism and partial albinism.

I think it is most likely that the bird you saw was in fact a "Krider's" but for such a difficult ID of a taxa that shows little pattern of vagrancy the committee will most likely need some physical evidence. Your excellent description does provide a very compelling reason to look for this midwestern form at hawk watches in the future.

Many thanks for taking the time to submit the description.
Sincerely

Matt Sharp
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

Krider's Red-tail Hawk, Stone Mtn Hawkwatch, October 21, 2002

Date: Wed, 30 Oct 2002 14:30:50 -0500

From: "Donald A. Bryant" <dab14@psu.edu>

PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

This form is presented as a convenience and guide. It can be used if desired, but is not necessary for submitting a report. Species requiring documentation are those on the Review List or not on the Official List of Birds of Pennsylvania. Send documentation to:

Nick Pulcinella, Secretary
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee
613 Howard Ave.
West Chester, PA 19380
nickpul@bellatlantic.net

SPECIES (common and scientific name) *Buteo jamaicensis*
Subspecies, if known "kriderii"

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1 **SEX** Unknown

AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable): Adult

DATE OF OBSERVATION October 21, 2002
TIME Afternoon, about 2:00 PM EDT

LOCATION (city, borough, township) Huntingdon-Mifflin County Line on Stone Mountain above Allensville

EXACT SITE (e.g. name of park, lake, road) Stone Mountain Hawkwatch

OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name Donald A. Bryant
Address 104 Nea' Yu' Ka Street
City Port Matilda State PA ZIP 16870
e-mail (optional) dab14@psu.edu phone (optional)
814-692-4464

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you):
Chuck Widmann

HABITAT (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details) Mountain Ridge

DISTANCE TO BIRD 150 feet at closest approach

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you)
Sun was behind and above; clear blue sky with no clouds and no haze.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED Swarovski 10X50's

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed - size relative to other species present; "jizz"= e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual):

The bird was seen together circling in a thermal with an adult Red-tailed Hawk, and was similar in size, but slightly smaller, and had the tell-tale wing and body shape of a large buteo. The bird was white underneath, and was completely unmarked on the belly. No streaking or belly band was observed at all. Faint, narrow patagial marks were visible on the underside of the wings, however, as were very faint commas. Wings tips and trailing edges were faintly lined darker as well. Large trapezoidal/rectangular windows were visible in the view of the wings from beneath with the sun shining through.

The tail was much lighter in coloration than that of the second Red-tail adult, and was quite obviously pinkish-orange rather than the typical deeper orange color routinely seen in adult Eastern Red-tailed Hawks. The tail both above and below was white where it joined the body of the bird. A single, narrow, darker subterminal band was clearly visible. Interestingly, the tail seemed unusually short-almost as if it had been "bobbed." It is possible that this was an optical illusion produced by the lighter coloration, but I believe that the tail was indeed shorter than is typical of Eastern adult Red-tails. I can find no mention of this in any field guide description, but the drawing Sibley's of the adult at the bottom of page 123 of shows this aspect very clearly and accurately portrays what both Chuck Widmann and I saw in this bird.

The upper side of the bird was very light in overall coloration and was mottled light brown with a large amount of white showing. The head was light colored as well, although not as white as I have seen in some drawings and photographs of immature Krider's Red-tails. This is consistent with the fact that this was an adult bird.

(Please use an additional page if necessary.)

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

The bird glided down ridge and then circled up in a thermal directly in front of the hawkwatch with a second, adult Red-tail Hawk. I had at least a couple of minutes of close-viewing of the bird in outstanding light to evaluate its field marks. During this time I was able to make close observations of the dorsal and ventral sides of the bird.

VOCALIZATIONS None

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY:

Photograph_____ Video recording_____ Audio recording_____ Drawing_____

Photographer/recorder/illustrator:

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____

ZIP_____

e-mail (optional)_____ phone

(optional)_____

Please include a copy of the photograph or recording with your report, and accompany it with a complete written documentation if the identification is obvious to you. If you made a drawing, please include it.

IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:

Not applicable

General
condition_____

If collected (by permit), location of specimen if
known_____

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES (how you eliminated others)

The bird was clearly a relatively large buteo, but was somewhat smaller than the nearby adult Red-tailed Hawk. The presence of the pinkish-orange tail coloration with a single sub-terminal band allows the elimination of immature birds that would have had multiple bands in the tail as well as other buteo species such as Red-shouldered Hawk (both immatures and adults excluded by field marks described above). The size and described field marks are inconsistent with the larger Ferruginous Hawk, that would have been more exciting but even less likely. The general absence of markings underneath, the presence of narrow patagial marks, and the pattern of coloration of the tail are inconsistent with Ferruginous Hawk.

DISCUSSION - Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it

Dunne et al. in hawks in flight (p. 21) mention the pinkish wash visible on the mostly white tail with a single dark terminal band. Other notable features as observed are the complete absence of underside markings on the body, the overall very light coloration (brown and white) on the dorsal side of the wings and body), and the obvious translucent patches in the wings due to the large patches of white in the wings. All of these field marks were observed. The head was light in color but not white. Some descriptions indicate that the head is lighter in color on immature birds, and this bird was clearly not immature but adult due to the coloration seen in the tail.

In distinguishing the bird from typical light-colored Eastern Red-tails: the most notable features were the overall impression of extremely light coloration, the large amount of white at the base of the tail, the very obvious pinkish-wash of the tail, and the white and light brown coloration

of the dorsal side. In light-colored Eastern Red-tails, the markings on the underside of the wings are typically much more obvious than was the case here-even if the belly band is nearly invisible. The white in the dorsal wing area would also be less obvious than was the case here.

In distinguishing the bird from a partial albino as an explanation for the light color: the bird had no irregularities of coloration of any type and was completely symmetrical in coloration. The field marks seen were not consistent with albinism, and the other coloration of the bird was not consistent with this as an explanation either.

(Please use an additional page if necessary)

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES

I have probably observed about 5,000 red-tail in the past 10 years, as I am regular observer and assisting site coordinator at the Stone Mountain Hawkwatch. I have seen many light-colored Eastern Red-tailed Hawks, and I have seen Krider's in the Plains previously as well.

ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION ? (why or why not)

I am as certain of the identification of this bird as one can ever be. During the past 10 years, I have seen 1000's of Red-tailed Hawks at this same location, including a marked red-tail earlier this year. I have seen a partial albino Red-tail once in the past. I am fully aware of the color variations and age-related plumage variations which exist for Red-tailed Hawks, having observed them in all parts of the U. S. I am used to looking at age variations in Red-tails at the hawk-watch and the associated color variations which one can see in this species. I have seen many, many light-colored, Eastern Red-tailed Hawks , including several light-colored and immature Eastern Red-tails on the day in question (we had a total of 77 Red-tails counted on that particular day and now have more than 1000 for this season), but this bird differed from all those in several important ways, as noted above. I have not seen a Red-tail Hawk at Stone Mountain previously that matched the observed field marks of this bird

REFERENCES CONSULTED:

During observation I consulted no references during observation, since it was clear that we were watching an adult variant of the Red-tail Hawk. After observation The Sibley Guide to Birds (David A. Sibley), A Field Guide to Hawks of North America, 2nd edition (William S. Clark and Brian K. Wheeler); A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors (Brian K. Wheeler and William S. Clark, 1st edition), Hawks in Flight (P. Dunne, D. Sibley, and C. Sutton).

DATE OF THIS REPORT: October 31, 2002

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER Donald A. Bryant

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Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round ~~One~~ *TWO*

Species: "Krider's" Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis kriderii*)

Date of Sighting: 21 October 2002 to 21 October 2002

Location: STONE MOUNTAIN

County: HUNTINGDON/MIFFLIN

Observer(s): Donald Bryant, Chuck Widmann

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: Donald Bryant, Chuck Widmann

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
G. Armistead				X				
D. Heathcote			X					
P. Hess					X			
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer			X					
R. Leberman				X	X			
M. Sharp			X					
TOTALS			4	2	1			
DECISION				X				

Comments:

4/3

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

2/10/04

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round One

Species: Red-tailed Hawk (Kriders) (Buteo jamaicensis kriderii)

Date of Sighting: 21 October 2002 to 21 October 2002

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Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: Donald Bryant

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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			5	1	1			
DECISION								

Comments: 5/2 Go To 2nd Round

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 6/12/03