

# PA Rare Bird Report

## PORC Rare Bird Report

Please check the PA Review List before submitting a report if you are unsure whether or not the species is rare: <http://www.pabirds.org/records/index.php/review-list/>

All information submitted through this form (including photographs) will become publicly available on the [PORC website](#). You may choose to exclude your address and phone number if you prefer.

Refer to [this webpage](#) for tips on how to document your sightings.

**Observer's Name** Paul Heveran  
**E-mail** birdmeister.paul@gmail.com  
**Observer's Address** United States

## Documentation

**Species (Common Name)** Mississippi Kite  
**Species (Scientific Name)** Ictinia mississippiensis  
**Number of individuals** 1

**Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)**  
 unknown

**Observation Date and Time** Monday, June 21, 2021 11:00

**Did you submit this sighting to eBird?**

Yes

**Link to eBird checklist** <https://ebird.org/checklist/S90551845>

**County** Bucks

**Location (City, Borough, Township)** Nockamixon Twp.

**Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)** Nockamixon State Park - Haycock Boat Launch area

**GPS coordinates of sighting** 40.491806, -75.191487

**Habitat** Man-made reservoir surrounded by deciduous and some

coniferous forest

**Distance to bird**

Unknown (at limit of unaided vision)

**Viewing conditions**

Partly sunny, hot and humid day but not too hazy

**Optical equipment used**

Zeiss Conquest HD 10x42 binoculars

**Description**

ID was made quickly based on the bird's very long, thin wings. The wingtip shape was somewhat like that of Broad-winged Hawk in that the wingtips were pointed but slightly blunted by a short outer primary. The shape was evident, even though I didn't see the outer primary specifically.

Color was tough to tell at the bird's altitude, but it appeared fairly dark below. When folded, the length of the bird's wings was really apparent. Its wingbeats were steady but fluid, not hurried as in most falcons.

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

Very high bird heading NE just right after 11:00 AM, seen from Rte 563 just past the bridge after Haycock Boat Launch at the north end of the park. It circled several times, making fairly tight circles, before gliding and flapping NE on a steady S wind.

**Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)**

Peregrines show thicker wing bases (with extremely pointed wingtips) and would be expected to circle more slowly and widely. In the sunny conditions, I would have expected to see Peregrine's white belly. Other raptors at similar heights showed at least some color. A kestrel appeared not long after, showing proportionally shorter wings and stiff, hurried wingbeats. The kestrel, although quite high up, showed a ruddy orange-brown color above and paler below. Broad-winged and Red-tailed Hawks at high altitude showed brown/paler color as well, while I remember this bird appearing rather dark.

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

Periodical cicadas have been in huge numbers at the park for several weeks. A Mississippi Kite was observed feeding at the park for a week or more until June 9, but not seen afterwards. Based on the fact that this bird was observed nearly two weeks later and was actively moving at high altitude, I tend to think this was a different bird.

Almost all raptor species observed on this day were catching and eating cicadas on the wing, including Broadwings, Redtails, and a kestrel. The habitat and prey availability could be very attractive to any wandering kites.

I do have a lot of experience with raptor ID from the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary fall count (6yrs), plus seeing many kites in the southern US.

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

Yes, the bird's shape was very distinctive even at high altitude.

**References Consulted**

**During**

none

**After**

none

**Uploads**

**Click to edit**

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