

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

10-94-19
Accepted

RED SHOULDERED HAWK
Buteo lineatus

Location: Blende; East of Pueblo about 3 miles on old Hwy. 50; Pueblo County, Colorado

Date: January 9, 1994

Setting:

I heard rumors of a Red-shouldered Hawk in Blende at the same local as the immature a couple of years ago. I checked there briefly a couple of times around Christmas and the New Year. But it wasn't until this visit that I saw the bird. I watched the bird from about 2:05 until 3:00 p.m. when it flew away. It remained perched midway up a large cottonwood during the entire observation period. I watched it from about 150 yards distance with binoculars and 20-60X scope in bright sun from my back. The weather was still and warm and viewing conditions were ideal.

This bird was in the same locale as the imm. Red-shouldered Hawk in January 1992. In fact, when I first saw it it was perched on the exact spot in a large cottonwood where we had found the immature on 2 years previously when Duane Nelson came down to see that bird. I think that this bird must be the same individual as the 1992 bird. It may have been here in 1993 too but no one looked for it and/or reported it.

Description:

The bird was a small buteo, plump and short-winged when perched. It was smaller than a Red-tailed Hawk, being much more reminiscent of a large Cooper's Hawk in size and shape when casually observed. From my field notes:

Small buteo. Yellow feet, black talons. Dark eye, close to front of face. Small bill with yellow cere and a pale loreal spot. Head rufous-orange with indistinct streaks and a slightly darker crown. It had a white moustachial line. The chin, throat and breast were reddish-orange. The belly and flanks were finely barred orange and white. Lower belly was pale off-white and the leggings were less distinctly barred with orangish. The wing coverts in the folded wing were heavily spotted black and white so as to appear almost barred. From the front, the underside of the tail was rounded with a wide, dark terminal band and a narrow white sub-terminal band. It had a red shoulder patch when perched and in flight from above. In flight the tail was narrowly barred black and white and the spread primaries and secondaries were barred indistinctly white and black.

Similar Species:

The dark eye, white lower belly, and short tail rule out Accipiters. The broad wings and plump body indicate a Buteo. The black and white barred tail and orange-barred underparts eliminate all other similar species except Broad-winged. Besides being the wrong season for Broad-winged, it would lack the barred flight feathers, black and white checkered coverts, and red shoulder.

Experience with Species:

I have seen Red-shouldered Hawk on many occasions outside of Colorado.

This report is prepared from notes made during and after observation.

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