

rec'd 5/25 (R)

2001-470

Colorado Field Ornithologists Sight Record Form

(Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.)

Each table cell will automatically enlarge as you type!

CFO-RC FILE X:

RESULTS:

Species:(Common Name) Common Black-hawk

(Scientific Name) Buteogallus anthracinus

Date(s) of occurrence: May 20, 2001

Number of birds seen: 1

Sex: ???

Plumage: Adult like, possibly sub-adult*

Exact location: Trinidad Lake / Trinidad State Recreation Area, near entrance, bird first observed west of park

County: Las Animas

Nearest town: Trinidad

Elevation: 6500 ft. approximately

Length of observation: 3 minutes

Time(s) of observation: 11:30 a.m.

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: Tony Leukering, Alan Versaw, Rich Levad, Gregg Goodrich, Bill Schmoker, BB Hahn, and others participating in field trip

Other Observers who independently saw the bird(s): none

Light Conditions (quality; direction relative to bird(s); position: Clear to partly cloudy, bright sun over head, bird moved from near western horizon to directly overhead.

Optical equipment used: Leica Trinovid 8 x 32

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): about 250 feet at closest, 1/2 mile at furthest

Was bird(s) photographed? Yes, by other observer

If so, have you submitted photos?

Who took the photographs? ???

Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred:

Oak and juniper covered hills with little undergrowth, in vicinity of large reservoir

Describe the bird's behavior (flying, feeding, habits, behaviors used in identifying the Species or in supporting the identification):

Soaring, low at first behind hills, approached group while soaring and gained considerable altitude while directly overhead, until he was no longer visible.

Describe the bird in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include the overall size and shape and how you placed the bird in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird(s). Describe other important details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches or copy field notes):

Bird was Buteo size and shape overall, (similar in size to Red-tailed hawk) mostly black with pale windows or commas at base of outside primaries. Tail was short and fanned, appearing rounded, with white band in center and narrow white terminal band on otherwise black tail. Wings were very broad, appearing to overlap tail with first few secondaries. * Main white tail band did not appear as thick as shown in field guides under adult plumage, thus possible sub-adult was observed. Other field marks resembled adult plumage bird.

Describe bird's call or song: None heard

Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them: Zone-tailed Hawk came to mind when I first noticed white banded tail on otherwise black raptor, however wings were too broad, tail was much too short and rounded, only 1 white tail band and white terminal band was observed, pale windows were evident at base of primaries, all serve to eliminate Zone-tailed Hawk. Overall shape was similar to Black Vulture, but shape of tail and color on wings and tail ruled this species out.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? I have observed Common Black-hawk on 3 other occasions, twice in SE Arizona and once in Big Bend Texas. I have observed Black Vulture many times in Arizona, Texas, Florida and Virginia. I have not observed Zone-tailed Hawk to date.

List books, guides, recordings or other sources consulted and how this influenced your identification (during and after observation): Tony Leukering identified bird immediately upon sighting. I confirmed my personnel observation using Sibley Guide to Birds, and National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America.

This report is from notes made during or after observation or later from memory XXXXX

Date of written report: May 23, 2001

Reporting observer: Glenn Walbek

Signature:

Glenn Walbek

Reporting Observer's Address: 10880 Parker Vista Road

City: Parker

State: CO

Zip: 80138

ATTN: TOBY LEAKERING

2001-47

RARE BIRD REPORT--SIGHT RECORD

R - 22 Jun 01

REPORT FILED BY: Alan E. Versaw
403 Maplewood Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
(719)266-5065

SPECIES: Common Black-Hawk
DATE(S): May 20, 2001
OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: Undetermined PLUMAGE: Adult
LATILONG: Trinidad (26) ELEVATION: roughly 6500 ft
TIME OF DAY: 1400 (approx) LOCALITY: Trinidad Lake State Park (near v.c.)
NEAREST TOWN: Trinidad COUNTY: Las Animas
DURATION OF OBSERVATION: approximately 2 minutes
OTHER OBSERVERS: CFO convention field trip group

LIGHT CONDITIONS: full sunlight (although sunlight was behind bird overhead)

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: Bushnell Natureview 8 X 42s

DISTANCE: 50 feet to several hundred feet

PHOTO DATA: none

BIRD BEHAVIOR: The bird was riding a thermal to progressively higher altitudes. When first seen, the bird was perhaps 50 feet or so overhead. The bird circled and rose several hundred feet during the duration of the sighting.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF BIRD: Black underneath, though with some lighter coloring in wings, especially near the base of the primaries. Yellowish around bill, thin white terminal band on tail, one *single* broad band across middle of tail. At least one tail feather appeared to be missing, creating something of a gap in the spread tail. With wings fully extended and tail spread for soaring, the bird appeared to have large, broad wings and a very short, rounded tail. Feet may have projected back some into the broad, white band in the tail, but did not project through the band.

SONG AND/OR CALL: None.

HABITAT DESCRIPTION: Pinon-juniper country surrounding a large reservoir, much asphalt in area that may have helped to create the quickly-rising thermal the bird was riding.

ELIMINATION OF SIMILAR SPECIES: Similar species would include the Zone-tailed Hawk and the Great Black-Hawk. Zone-tailed was eliminated by shortness of tail and the clear lack of another white band in the spread tail. Less conspicuously, perhaps, were the too-broad wings for a Zone-tail. The Great Black-Hawk should be eliminated (after checking a Mexican field guide) by the lack of another white band higher in the tail and the feet that did not project through the main, central tail band. Also, the Howell and Webb guide shows the GRBH tail projecting farther back than our bird's tail did.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR BIRDS: No previous experience with any

REFERENCES CONSULTED: Howell and Webb, Clark and Wheeler, Sibley

DATE OF REPORT: June 12, 2001

SIGNATURE:

Alan Versaw

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

CFO-ORC FILE # 2001-47

NEW STATE RECORD _____ UNUSUAL RECORD X

Species: black-hawk, sp. (*Buteogallus* sp.)

Rec'd 2/18/03

Date: 20 May 2001

Number seen: one

Sex: ?

Plumage: Basic

Locality: Trinidad State Park, on north side of reservoir

Elevation: ~ 6200 '

Nearest town: Trinidad

County: Las Animas

Time observed: ~12:00 MDT

Duration of observation: about 3 minutes

Description: While having lunch on a CFO convention field trip, Glenn Walbek found a black raptor circling overhead. He asked me to look at it, which I did, and immediately realized that it was a black-hawk. I yelled at the rest of the participants and we all watched it circle lazily overhead for quite a while before the bird finally headed north over our heads. For much of the observation, the bird was fairly low. Unfortunately, no one had a camera handy and by the time I got one of the participants to get her digital camera out of a car, the bird had gained considerable altitude. That probably explains why I never received the pictures from her.

Most close views were when the bird was nearly straight overhead and I saw the underparts very well. When the bird was much more distant, I could see the upperparts at particular points of the circles it was turning in the sky. Since I felt that the bird did not seem to have the shape of Common Black-Hawk (COBH) with which I have extensive experience in the Neotropics, I paid particular attention to the uppertail coverts, as I remembered reading in an identification article that this feature was useful in separating Common Black-Hawk from Great Black-Hawk (GRBH).

While there were no other raptors nearby for comparison, the bird was obviously a large, wide-winged, short-tailed hawk with all dark body plumage. The head, body, back, and wing linings were blackish. The undersides of the remiges were nearly as black as the wing linings, contrasting with the wing linings only a very small amount. The outermost primary or two had pale bases that formed a very vague patch near the leading edge of the wing. The bird had two (perhaps, three) middle secondaries and one (maybe two) inner primaries that appeared as if they were retained juvenal feathers or were for some other reason much paler and more barred than the remainder of the remiges. The wings seemed longer relative to width than I thought typical of the COBHs that I have seen. Additionally, I do not recall (though I did not write this feature down) the bird showing an obvious, wide dark trailing edge to the remiges. Finally, only the five outer primaries were well-emarginated. The wingbase (that is, the distance from the leading edge of the wing to the trailing edge of the wing, as measured at the body) was at least 2/3 the length of the body.

The tail was black with a wide, white band crossing all rectrices at about the midpoint between base and tip of the tail. Additionally, each rectrix was tipped white. I could not discern a basal white band on the tail, but I'm not sure that I could have seen it. However, the tail extended beyond the trailing edge of the wings by a distance about equivalent (perhaps, a bit less) to that of half of the wingbase. When I could see the upper side of the bird while circling at distance, I could see a largish area of whitish in the region of the uppertail coverts. The bird was too far away to discern it any more precisely than that, except to say that I'm convinced that the whitish was not on the white of the tail, as there was an area of blackish between the tail and this whitish area.

Similar species eliminated: Though I am positive that the bird was a *Buteogallus*, I am not convinced that I know what species it was. My first thought upon really looking at the bird was that it seemed longer-winged and longer-tailed than I remember COBHs being. Unfortunately, I did not see in soaring flight the only GRBH that I've ever knowingly seen. The coloration of the undersides of the remiges were very reminiscent of the COBHs I have seen in Costa Rica and Panama, being mostly blackish, excepting the feathers that were paler and were possibly retained from a previous plumage, and not like that depicted by Howell and Webb (1995) and described as being the type "common in N Mexico" and presumably being the common type in the southwestern U.S. While I agree that the odds of the bird being a GRBH are exceedingly slim, I am concerned about identifying this bird on the odds. Nor do I wish to proclaim that this bird represents the first record of GRBH north of Mexico without being absolutely sure. I doubt that the bird was a GRBH and believe that it was probably a COBH, though am confused by the shape being different than I remember for the species.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): No vocalizations heard.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen >75 COBH in Costa Rica, Panama, and Mexico, but only one GRBH (in Costa Rica); I have seen no other forms of the genus.

Light conditions: sun high in a blue sky and variably to my left and right, relative to the bird

Optical equipment used: Swarovski 8.5x42

Distance, and how estimated: the bird was initially only ~50m up

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Glenn Walbek, Rich Levad, Alan Versaw and a large number of participants on the CFO convention trip

Other observers who saw the bird independently: none

If photographed, type of equipment and film: did not photograph

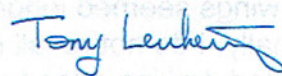
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: Howell and Webb (1995)

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 14500 Lark Bunting Lane, Brighton, CO 80603

Date report was written: Initiated on 23 May 2001, continued on 2 November 2001, and completed 2-6 February 2003.

Literature Cited:

Howell, S.N.G. and S. Webb. 1995. A Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Northern Central America. Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford. 851 pp.