

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PAPE BIRD SIGHTING  
FOR  
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

29-90-31

A

Species: Lesser Nighthawk (Vernacular name) | Chordeiles acutipennis (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 28 May 1990 Time Bird Seen: 8:10 p.m. to 8:40 p.m.

Locality: Two Buttes Reservoir  
Lamar, Colorado  
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binoculars

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of birds seen: 3 Sex: ♂ (all 3, I believe) Plumage: \_\_\_\_\_

Light conditions: Poor. Low light levels at dusk, but adequate to see pattern

Distance from bird, and how measured: Estimated 50-250 feet.

Describe the bird's overall behavior:  
The 3 birds appeared over the marshy and riparian areas below the dam a few minutes after 2 calling Com. Nighthawks began to forage & call. The Lesser Nighthawks did not call. They foraged lower than C.N-hawks, over treetops, not high up. Flight is fluttering, often pulling up, tail spread & nearly hovering then flying on.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:  
Marsh & riparian growth

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):  
Bob Spencer & Thompson Marsh

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Overall about 8" long and "falcon-winged", longish tail with shallow fork or notch. Smaller-bodied, shorter-winged than Common Nighthawk. Wingtips more rounded, less pointed than Common Nighthawk. Underside of body and wing linings dull brown with darkish undertail. Tail with subterminal whitish bars. Wings with white bar about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of way (not  $\frac{1}{2}$ ) to wing tip. Bar is small, not reaching all the way to rear edge of wing.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Did not call.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Long notched tail, falcon-like wing shape, fly-catching habits at dusk indicate nightjar; Wingbar indicates a nighthawk.  
Com. Nighthawk = Darker wing linings; more pointed wings; larger white wingbar  $\frac{1}{2}$  way out to wing tip; larger overall.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

Moderate experience with L. Nighthawk including specimens.  
Much w/ Com. Nighthawk.

This report was written from notes made during X after \_\_\_ observation; from memory \_\_\_.

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Return Form To: CFO Records Committee  
c/o Curator - Dept. of Zoological Collections  
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