

LESSER NIGHTHAWK

Chordeiles acutipennis accepted

29-95-55

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name)

DATE OF OBSERVATION	TIME OF OBSERVATION	NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN	SEX	PLUMAGE
July 25, 1995	0835 TO 0850 MDT	One	Male	Adult
	TO			
	TO			

LOCALITY: Two Buttes SWA along County Road VVELEVATION: 4150' COUNTY: Daca

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY IDENTIFIED THE BIRD (Names, Addresses, Telephone Num

None that I know of.OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: 9.5 x 44 Celestron BinocularsWEATHER CONDITIONS: ClearBIRD/SUN ORIENTATION: Sun directly upon bird at rest coming from observer's leftDISTANCE FROM BIRD AND HOW MEASURED: 15' up to 200'. Estimated.

BEHAVIOR AND DEMEANOR: First observed asleep atop of wooden fence post about 100 yds from Co. Rd. VV. Left my car and approached slowly stopping occasionally to study the bird through my binoculars. At about 15', the bird awoke and took off flying low over the prairie. Flight was erratic, bobbing the way and that. It circled about as far off as 200', coming directly right over my head several times no more than 15'-20' above me. After some 10 minutes of fluttering about me, it sailed off to the east and disappeared from view as it settled back to earth.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION (EMPHASIS ON KEY FIELD MARKS): Relative size and shape; plumage; color pattern of head, upperparts and underparts; shape and color of bill, wings, tail, feet and legs; eye color.

Mottled plumage on upper parts with buffy-brown, white and gray. White throat. Buffy brown underparts with dark barring. Under tail coverts buffy. Bill very short. White bar across primaries (very difficult to tell if these bars are further out on the wing than in C. minor). However, the shorter and more rounded wings compared with the more buffy overall plumage and undertail coverts are more characteristic of C. acutipennis. Long, notched tail with white tail band.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION (continued):

HABITAT: Semi-arid grassland (short-grass prairie).

VOCALIZATION (call/song; how delivered-perched, in flight; frequency; duration):

None heard (unfortunately!).

ELIMINATION OF SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

COMMON NIGHTHAWK (*Chordeiles minor*): Wings somewhat longer and more pointed. Overall plumage with more black and gray mottling. Tail also somewhat longer. Undertail coverts white. Flight is generally higher above the ground with slower and deeper wing beats in zig-zag motions. Underparts whitish with obvious dark banding.

COMMON POORWILL (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*): Considerably smaller. White tipped outer tail feathers. Lacks white bar across primaries.

WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Caprimulgus vociferus*): Somewhat larger. Prominent white outer tail feathers. Lacks white bar across primaries.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*): Very much larger, lacks white bar across primaries.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES:

LESSER NIGHTHAWK: Seen many times in southern Texas (particularly at Falcon Lake State Park - as recently as April 1995). Also seen in southern Arizona and in east-central California. Seen once before in Colorado: once at Highline Reservoir SRA, Mesa County on July 6, 1992.

COMMON NIGHTHAWK: Seen every year since I began bird-watching in 1939 throughout most of the United States (lower 48) and across southern Canada.

COMMON POORWILL: Seen many times in Colorado since 1964, also in California (Yosemite N.P.) and throughout southern Arizona.

WHIP-POOR-WILL: A common summer bird in the 1950's and 1960's on eastern Long Island, N.Y. (much less common today). Seen once in Colorado (Colorado Springs - Silver Falls on 7/21/81). Seen often in southern Arizona.

BOOKS, ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICE CONSULTED THAT INFLUENCED THIS REPORT:

The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding, Volume 2. Helped to confirm observation.

THIS REPORT WAS WRITTEN FROM NOTES MADE DURING X AFTER OBSERVATION; FROM MEMORY X

NAME: JACK REDDALL

SIGNATURE: Jack Reddall

DATE: August 6 1995.