

Louisiana Ornithological Society's  
Louisiana Bird Records Committee  
Report Form

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review (to assure that all pertinent) information is accounted for). Attach additional Pages as necessary. Please print or type. Attach Xerox of field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. English and Scientific names:

Golden Eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos*

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate

One, appeared to be winter adult.

3. Locality: LOUISIANA: (parish) (specific locality)

St. Landry Parish, Flying east to west over US 71 near mile XX.

4. Date(s) when observed:

December 28, 2019

5. Time(s) of day when observed:

1:10 PM CST.

6. Reporting observer and address:

Jay V. Huner  
428 Hickory Hill Drive  
Boyce, Louisiana 71409

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):

None.

8. Other observers who Independently identified the bird(s):

None.

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):

Light good.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition):

None.

11. Distance to bird(s):

First saw bird about 100 yards from US 71 to my right/east. I watched as it flew westward up and over the highway as I passed under it and it passed over the highway.

12. Duration of Observation:

Hard to say 15-20 seconds?

13. Habitat:

Agricultural area in bottomland hardwood landscape.

14. Behavior of bird/circumstances of observations (flying, feeding, resting; including and stress habits in identification: relate events surrounding observation):

The bird was either flying from the ground or had swooped into the area and was regaining altitude.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen: include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species, body bulk, shape, proportions, bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species): See following eBird description.

I can only report what I saw. I have no images. I was driving along US 71 about 9 miles or so north of its intersection with US 190 in early afternoon. I was passing a working wetland system to the east side of the road and noticed a very large concentration of White Ibis some distance from the road when I saw a large raptor flying at about a 45 degree angle from east to west about tree top level and it passed over my truck. I first thought Turkey Vulture. It was flapping its wings slowly. As I passed northward I realized that the bird was not a vulture. There was no two toned under wing pattern. The face was that of a raptor, not a vulture. The head, throat, and chest area just below the neck were "golden" color. The body was dark brown. There was no mottling of the underside of the bird. The wings were more rectangular than broad. I did not see any

specific under tail pattern. Based on rather immediate review of Kaufman's field guide I concluded that the bird was an adult Golden Eagle. The National Geographic field guide shows white bands on the under tail of adult Golden Eagles. However, such stripping is not particularly apparent in the Peterson field guide nor in the Crossley raptor field guide. The Golden Eagles that visit Louisiana are said to be from the eastern Canada sub population that specializes on preying on waterfowl, especially geese. The area where I observed the bird is one where there are several large wintering flocks of Snow Geese and Greater White-Fronted Geese. Furthermore, Golden Eagles do feed on deer and hogs, especially carcasses. The area where the bird was observed is intensely hunted at this time of year, primarily for deer. However, any hog seen will be shot on sight. So, the presence of quadraped carcasses upon which the bird may have been feeding and, perhaps, attracted it to the area is very likely. I saw no flocks of geese from US 71 but that doesn't mean that they were not nearby. A report will be forwarded eventually to the Louisiana Rare Bird Records Committee. In any event, I make this report in order to suggest that people traveling in the area may wish to look for eagles.

16. Voice:

Not heard.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):

As discussed above, the bird did not have any under wing "light" pattern as associated with a Turkey Vulture. It did not have mottling as associated with an immature Bald Eagle.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? Attached?):

None

19. Previous experience with this species:

I have seen Golden Eagles in Arizona, Alaska and Colorado. I reported having seen an immature Golden Eagle in Cameron Parish at Lacassine Pools.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

- a. at time of observation: Kaufman's Field Guide and National Geographic Field Guide.
- b. after observation: Crossley's Guide to Raptors, Peterson's Field Guide, and various internet imagery.

21. This description is written from: \_\_\_notes made during the observation (notes attached?); \_\_\_note made after the observation (date: 12/28/19); \_\_\_\_\_ memory.

Notes: 12 28 19 1:30 PM

US 71 ~ Mile 7-8

E-W across tree top level. Huge raptor. Came over field rice field/CF pond. Below dark brown. Head, neck, upper breast golden color. No mottling on body or wings. Uniform brown of wings. Wings more rectangular than broad.

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain.

Yes.

23. Signature of reporter \_\_\_\_Jay V. Huner\_\_\_\_ date\_\_02/05/20\_\_ time 5:25 PM