

Paul

This shows the correspondence with Van on email.

This is the accumulated data on the report of a possible Short-tailed Hawk in Cameron on July 27 by Melvin Weber and Robby Bacon.

The reason I am sending this report now is because I would like to have it on file for the future. I had dropped the idea of sending it as a sight record to be considered after the correspondence with Van and the Id by Bill Clark. Then on Aug 17 when Ronald Stein and I had an obvious Swanson's in Cameron. See photo in email to Van. It was large like a Swanson's ought to be and did in no way remind me of a Broad-winged Hawk..

Then using the measurement reference of the standard power pole crossbar (3.5 inches by 4.5 inches) this bird measures very close to 15 inches from tip of head to tip of tail. Then there is at least a 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch from tail to tip of wings. Nowhere in my reading and viewing photos does it say or show a smaller race of the Swanson's Hawk that is much smaller than the standard 19 inches. Then there is the issue of the tail. In the photo it can be clearly seen that the tail is noticeably shorter than the wings. Swanson's Hawks are always mentioned as having long wings reaching the tip of the tail.

Anyway, I decided I wanted it on record in case the future birders define some difference that can be observed in the photo. Or maybe this species becomes regular to which this would possibly be one of the first for the state. In my searching I was surprised to find that a Short-tailed Hawk has been accepted in the state of Michigan. This only shows that some of these birds to stray a bit.

The last part before the official long form of this correspondence came from Robby Bacon. I asked him for his notes since he is a great note-taker throughout any birding outing.

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This is in response to a phone call to Van.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Melvin Weber <[mweber@rtconline.com](mailto:mweber@rtconline.com)>

**Subject:** Short-tailed Hawk

**Date:** July 27, 2017 at 7:30:40 PM CDT

To: Robby Bacon <[robbybacon49@gmail.com](mailto:robbybacon49@gmail.com)>

Check out these photos. My guess is that it is a Short-tailed Hawk, not a Broad-winged.







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In response to Van's email below.

It was very small, we thought it possibly could be a Broad-winged Hawk at first from the size alone. All of back and tail looked pretty uniformly dark. Rufus on chin-chest area was only a light wash of color, not solid like a Swanson's. We didn't have Swanson's today but we've seen many recently and it just didn't look like one. We didn't even consider it as a possibility. From the size I thought of a possible Peregrine before we got close enough to see any details.

On Jul 27, 2017, at 9:14 PM, James V Remsen <[najames@lsu.edu](mailto:najames@lsu.edu)> wrote:

Melvin — tell me why you don't think it's a Swainson's. Hard to tell from a perched phot.

Definitely not Broad-winged.

Van

=====

Dr. J. V. Remsen

Prof. of Natural Science and Curator of Birds

Museum of Natural Science/Dept. Biological Sciences

LSU, Baton Rouge, LA 70803

[najames@lsu.edu](mailto:najames@lsu.edu)

On Jul 27, 2017, at 7:55 PM, Melvin Weber <[mweber@rtconline.com](mailto:mweber@rtconline.com)> wrote:

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I was trying for pictures so wasn't looking with the binoculars. Robby said he saw nothing unusual, basically dark above as it flew away from us never banking. It went to some big oaks but we didn't see if it landed and couldn't relocate it so not much new info there.

On Jul 27, 2017, at 9:43 PM, James V Remsen <[najames@lsu.edu](mailto:najames@lsu.edu)> wrote:

I figured, but just wanted to hear it from you. What happened when it flew?

=====

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[najames@lsu.edu](mailto:najames@lsu.edu)

On Jul 27, 2017, at 9:37 PM, Melvin Weber <[mweber@rtconline.com](mailto:mweber@rtconline.com)> wrote:

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Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Bill Clark <[raptours@earthlink.net](mailto:raptours@earthlink.net)>

**Subject: Re: Fwd: Short-tailed Hawk**

**Date:** July 28, 2017 at 7:02:01 AM CDT

**To:** James V Remsen <[najames@lsu.edu](mailto:najames@lsu.edu)>

Hi Van,

Yes, you are correct; it is an adult Swainson's. Most likely a male.

Cheers, Bill

On 7/27/2017 9:47 PM, James V Remsen wrote:

Bill — what do you think of this bird? Melvin (cc'd) said it was small like a Broad-winged and never considered Swainson's

Here's a snip of our original exchange:

“””

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Definitely not Broad-winged.

Van

---

Van,

Just for information sake. On Thursday August 17 Ronald Stein and I went to Cameron. I didn't report anything to LaBird since we had nothing worthy of reporting however there was something of interest to me. East of the town of Cameron on a pole we spotted a large hawk. Upon closer approach it could have possibly been an Osprey with its dark back and white on the head but it seemed a bit smaller than an Osprey. At the first glance with binoculars it was easy to see it was a Swanson's. See photo below. Now I started wondering why it was so easy to call this one a Swanson's and the one on July 27 I didn't seriously consider being a Swanson's. After reviewing the pictures I noticed the crossbar as a reference. I have found out that power pole crossbars are a standard 3.5 by 4.5 inches. Using this for a measuring tool the July 27th bird comes close to 15 inches head to tail. That's why I thought it to be small (it was). Wish you could have seen it.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** James V Remsen <[najames@lsu.edu](mailto:najames@lsu.edu)>

**Subject: Re: Short-tailed Hawk**

**Date:** August 21, 2017 at 6:59:02 PM CDT

**To:** Melvin Weber <[mweber@rtconline.com](mailto:mweber@rtconline.com)>

**Cc:** Robby Bacon <[robbybacon49@gmail.com](mailto:robbybacon49@gmail.com)>

I wish I'd been there, too!

=====

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LSU, Baton Rouge, LA 70803

najames<at>[LSU.edu](mailto:najames@LSU.edu)

On Aug 21, 2017, at 6:17 PM, Melvin Weber <[mweber@rtconline.com](mailto:mweber@rtconline.com)> wrote:

Van,

Just for information sake. On Thursday August 17 Ronald Stein and I went to Cameron. I didn't report anything to LaBird since we had nothing worthy of reporting however there was something of interest to me. East of the town of Cameron on a pole we spotted a large hawk. Upon closer approach it could have possibly been an Osprey with its dark back and white on the head but it seemed a bit smaller than an Osprey. At the first glance with binoculars it was easy to see it was a Swanson's. See photo below. Now I started wondering why it was so easy to call this one a Swanson's and the one on July 27 I didn't seriously consider being a Swanson's. After reviewing the pictures I noticed the crossbar as a reference. I have found out that power pole crossbars are a standard 3.5 by 4.5 inches. Using this for a measuring tool the July 27th bird comes close to 16 inches. That's why I thought it to be small (it was). Wish you could have seen it.





The following is an email I received from Robby Bacon when I asked him for his notes on the bird.

Melvin,

The following is a description of the hawk observed on July 27, 2017 just east of Peveto Woods. The description is based on notes taken just after the observation.

The first impression, based on the size of the crossbar upon which it was perched, was of a very small raptor about the size of a Broad-winged Hawk. The general appearance was solidly dark above, and when the bird turned, solidly white below.

With binoculars, the back was seen to be dark brown with only slightly paler tips to some of the wing coverts. The very long primaries, extending just beyond the tip of the tail, were a darker brown. The upper side of the dark brown tail had slightly darker barring. The head had a dark hooded appearance, with a few lighter feathers and a distinct whitish area just above the bill (not readily noticeable in your photos because of shadows). The only deviation from the plain brown coloration was distinctly rufous patches on either side of the neck.

When the bird turned to face us, it was noted to be totally white underneath including the throat, breast, belly, and undertail coverts. Again, the darker looking breast in your photos is a result of shadows. The breast was clearly white.

As the bird flew away from us, it was apparent that the top of the wings were solidly brown while the underside resembled the light coverts and dark flight feathers of a Swainson's Hawk. However, I made note of the fact that to me the contrast was not as strong as in Swainson's, with the flight feathers appearing more mottled.

Since I had never seen a Short-tailed Hawk, that species never came to my mind until after the field notes were taken and references were checked once I was home. And because of the obviously very small size and white breast, Swainson's Hawk never entered my mind either.

I hope this is helpful.

Robby

## **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 or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more

obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <[zoiseaux@lusfiber.net](mailto:zoiseaux@lusfiber.net)> .

1. English and Scientific names: Short-tailed Hawk ( *Buteo hyurus* )
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):  
one adult
3. Parish: Cameron  
Specific Locality: ½ mile east of Peveto Woods road on main highway
4. Date(s) when observed: 7-27-17
5. Time(s) of day when observed: roughly 11 am
6. Reporting observer and address: Melvin Weber , 171 Cedar Drive Reserve  
La. 70084 [mweber@rtconline.com](mailto:mweber@rtconline.com)
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Robby Bacon
8. Other observers who *independently identified* the bird(s):
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Good light, bird on pole cross-bar along road, clear sky, I think.
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): 8X40 binoculars (MW)
11. Distance to bird(s): About 200 feet
12. Duration of observation: two minutes
13. Habitat:  
  
Open marsh and fields with some small scrubs and a few larger oaks nearby. Also with power pole line along road paralleling beach.
14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):  
  
Bird sitting on cross bar of power pole, observed until it flew westward away from our viewing location.

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, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

As included in the emails, small hawk, 15 inches head to tail with  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  wing extension beyond tail. Included at the end of this correspondence is Robby's description. Although the coloring is superficially somewhat like a Swainson's, that wasn't a consideration since the size of the bird eliminated Swainson's.

16. Voice:

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

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

5 photos included, 3 of Short-tailed Hawk and two of a Swainson's obtained on August 17 by Melvin Weber.

19. Previous experience with this species:

Seen once in Florida but this was long ago and had no bearing on this observation since it was a flyover sighting.

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

We briefly considered the possibility of Short-tailed Hawk at the sighting but also talked about a possible Broad-winged Hawk. Not till that night when looking at the photos on the computer did it become apparent that it most probably was a Short-tailed Hawk.

a. at time of observation:

National Geographic guide.

b. after observation:

All guides and lots of internet photos.

21. This description is written from:

notes made during the observation. Are notes attached?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	<input type="text"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

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

No. Just believe strongly that what we saw was a Short-tailed Hawk.

23. Date: 9-18-17

Time: 3:30 PM

24. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page?

Yes

If yes, may we include your name with the report? Yes