

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

1. English and Scientific names: White-tailed Hawk, *Geranoaetus albicaudatus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
2; 1 in near adult and 1 in juvenile plumage
3. Parish: Calcasieu Parish
Specific Locality: Fruge Road, about 1 mile N of T with Nunez/Lionel Derouen Rds.
4. Date(s) when observed: 8 October 2017

5. Time(s) of day when observed: 10:02-ca.10:30 a.m.

6. Reporting observer and address: Paul Conover, Lafayette LA

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): none

8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): none known

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): Good sunlight behind me, but heatwaves

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss 10s, Nikon Fieldscope 20-60X, Nikon D3300 with 200 mm lens

11. Distance to bird(s): According to Google Maps, the birds were about 500-600 yards from road. One later flew and I was able to drive under it as it soared about 100 yards up.

12. Duration of observation: Ca. 20 minutes

13. Habitat: Open pasture land with a few thin treelines of chickentrees and tootache trees, and some plowed-under fields.

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): One bird first spotted perched on side of distant tree. On examination it turned out to be an adult. It flew and landed in field. I then observed that it was interacting with another bird, a juvenile. The birds appeared to be facing off over something on the ground; I saw one raising its wings several times, and later saw one reaching down and pulling on something on the ground with its bill, as if feeding. After a few minutes one bird, the juvenile, flew across the back of the field as if to land, and then began to soar. The adult went back to the treeline, and the juvenile soared to the E. I quit watching the flying bird as it headed into the morning sun, and got back on the perched bird.

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*):

The adult/near-adult was a standard WTHA, a stocky, long-winged "buteo" mainly solid brown above and white below, with a distinctly black-banded white tail and bright rufous shoulder markings.

Head above appeared solid brown seen against sky, although white bases to rear crown feathers were exposed several times during preening. Against the backdrop of the field, the head and mantle seemed somewhat ashy. The color of the throat was difficult to discern, but I think it was brown; if so, that would indicate that it was just short of adult plumage. Cere appeared yellow, bill grayish with dark tip, but at the distance I may have misinterpreted the finer points of the bill color.

Wings when spread appeared grayish above, perhaps with darker tips.

Tail and rump white, tail with distinct blackish subterminal band.

Underparts white, with some dark barring on flanks visible under folded wings.

Underwings not seen well.

Legs and feet yellow.

Juvenile dark overall with white blaze on chest. In flight dorsally, dark brownish above with slight reddish tinge to lesser coverts, whitish rump, gray tail. From below, underwing coverts mostly mottled dark, except median coverts pale and outlined by dark feathering. Outer primaries appeared pale-based with dark tips; all other flight feathers finely barred and appeared dusky grayish. Tail from below pale with very fine barring, no subterminal band visible, indicating juvenile rather than later plumage. Head appeared hooded brown, breast with white patch, belly coarsely barred. Undertail coverts whitish with slight dark barring.

16. Voice: too far to hear anything.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Pattern of adult unique for North American raptors. Young bird with dark patagial area could be confused with darker redtail, but chest blaze, tail color and pattern, slight amount of reddish on shoulder all match young WTHA.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Many photos and much video, but mostly from a great distance.

19. Previous experience with this species: Experience with birds of most ages in Louisiana, and decent experience in the past in Texas.

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

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation:

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation.	Are notes attached?	No, taped
<input type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation.	At what date?	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	memory		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	study of images		

22. Are you positive of your identification? Yes.

23. Date: 10/09/2017





