

**LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE  
RARE BIRD DOCUMENTATION**

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**Species:** White-tailed Hawk, *Geranoaetus albicaudatus*

**Location:** Fruge Road just S of Hwy 14, Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana

**Date:** 1 and 2 November 2017

**Age and sex:** One juvenile, one adult. Sexes unknown.

**Molt status:** None apparent on the juvenile. The adult had some primaries in sheath.

**Number of individuals:** Two

**Other observers:** Many YRARF participants

**Original observer:** Paul Conover

**Circumstances:** Matt Brady and I lead field trips to look for these stakeout rarities during the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival, each day with about 20 participants. We found both individuals quite easily on 1 November, and the juvenile on 2 November. On both days the birds were quite far out in the fields to the west of Fruge Road, at the closest being about 600 meters distant. I managed some poor photos of the juvenile on 2 November, but other participants managed to get some photos of the adult on 1 November. Our eBird checklists from both days are here: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40275013> <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40255295>

**Description:** Both birds had distinctly different wing shape and structure from a *Buteo*, although were somewhat similar in this regard to a Swainson's Hawk. They had rather broad wings (at least at the base), very pointed wing tips, rather short tails, and stocky bodies. The juvenile appeared to have a somewhat longer tail, perhaps accentuated by slightly narrower wings. The juvenile was almost entirely dark brown, having just a few pale marks on the greater coverts on the upperside. Below it had sparse white streaking and a distinct white patch on the chest. The tail was whitish, becoming gradually dusky brown towards the tip. The underwing also had sparse white streaking. The adult was entirely pure white below and gray above. The head was gray, but I didn't get a look at the throat. The tail was white with a black terminal band. I thought I saw the rufous on the back, but couldn't tell exactly where.

**Discussion:** Both birds were easily identified as White-tailed Hawks. The juvenile had the distinctive white chest patch and was otherwise mostly black. No other dark hawk shows this color pattern. The adult had the distinctive tail pattern and gray-and-white body.









