

General Field Notes

DAVID S. LEE, Department Editor
North Carolina State Museum, P.O. Box 27647
Raleigh, N.C. 27611

JULIAN R. HARRISON, Associate Editor
Department of Biology, The College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C. 29401

Swainson's Hawk in North Carolina

GERALDINE COX
P.O. Box 162, Washington, N.C. 27889
ELIZABETH BALL
P.O. Box 751, Washington, N.C. 27889

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About 0930 on 9 December 1979, while traveling south on the US 17 bypass of Vanceboro, Craven County, N.C., just south of the railroad crossing, we saw a hawk crossing the road ahead of us. At first sight the slight upturn of the wings suggested a Marsh Hawk, but the larger size and flight pattern were not right for that species. We were able to pull off the road and get out of the car to observe the bird for 2 minutes or more. We studied the bird carefully in good light and at all angles as it circled around and over us as low as 15 and 20 feet. Field marks were studied with and without binoculars (7X). The bird then soared off into the bright sun.

We were able to view the almost uniform grayish-brown dorsal portion of the body and wings, and the upper tail was noted to have a slightly lighter colored rump patch. From below, the wing linings and body were almost white. There was an almost "wing window" look in the primaries. The light buffy tail was very lightly barred and had a darker and wider terminal band. The dark brown chest band was conspicuous, giving the bird a hooded look. It was a case of "just like the book" except the tail bands were not quite as dark as the soaring light-phase Swainson's Hawk in *Birds of North America* (Robbins, Bruun, Zim, and Singer, Golden Press, New York, 1966, p. 81). Having seen hundreds of these hawks in various plumages in the spring in Texas and many more crossing the plains during the summer, we have no doubt that this bird was a Swainson's Hawk.

[NOTE: See the report of the North Carolina Records Committee elsewhere in this issue.—DSL]

A Probable Winter Record of Swainson's Hawk from Tyrrell County, N.C., with Comments on a Fall 1965 Sighting from the Outer Banks

ELOISE F. POTTER
Route 3, Box 114 AA, Zebulon, N.C. 27597
PAUL W. SYKES JR.
4195 Maurice Drive, Delray Beach, Florida 33445

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As Potter traveled east on U.S. 64 about 1500 on 1 February 1980, a pale buteo flew from a snow-covered plowed field just east of Columbia, Tyrrell County, N.C. The bird took flight from the ground approximately 35 m ahead of the car and 4 m off