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Corrections or omissions should be called to the attention of the Bibliography Committee: Sally Hoyt Spofford, Chairman, John B. Belknap, Allen H. Benton, and Kenneth C. Parkes.

FIELD NOTES

Swainson's Hawk in central New York: At approximately 5:30 p.m. on May 3, 1970 I went to the home of the Clifton Hances in Etna, New York, to observe a hawk which they had noticed circling over their yard, a bird which seemed unlike other hawks with which they were familiar.

Although the Hances had seen it fairly low at first, at the time I first had the bird under observation with 8 x 30 binoculars, it was approximately 500 feet in altitude and about 800 feet away. It remained circling at approximately this distance for 4-5 minutes and then began a slow ascent as it drifted off to the northeast. Because of a brightly overcast sky I was unable to get a clear look at the markings of the hawk, but the shape and soaring method of the bird were clearly observable. My first impression was of a Rough-legged Hawk or Osprey, but the bird under observation did not fit the characteristics of either of these species. The more I watched the bird, the more it reminded me of the Swainson's Hawks I have observed in migration through Arizona and during the breeding seasons at other localities in the western U.S. and Canada. The bird was obviously a buteo of "red-tail size", but the wings which tended to taper to a point were not as in the red-tailed hawk.

After the bird disappeared from view, I gave a copy of Peterson's Field Guide to Mrs. Hance. She had observed the hawk when it was much closer and had seen the markings on the bird. I asked her to pick out (from the ventral view diagrams of flying hawks) the hawk which most resembled the bird we had been watching. She pointed to the diagram of the light phased Swainson's Hawk and remarked that this looked most like the bird but that she had never heard of this hawk. I asked her why she thought the bird resembled the Swainson's Hawk diagram. Mrs. Hance said that the dark flight feathers and light wing lining had been obvious to her and this first led her to call me since the wing pattern appeared so unusual to her (Before I showed her the diagram she had told me the wing pattern was somewhat odd, but couldn't quite explain what was different.)

It is my opinion that the hawk we observed was a Swainson's Hawk. Mrs. Hance's definite identification of the wing pattern, and my observations on the birds shape and my failure to be able to identify it as any eastern buteo or other eastern soaring hawk, tend to support this view.

John R. Haugh, Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Ed. Note: While there are extremely few records of the Swainson's Hawk in the east, except in Florida, John Haugh's years of experience in identifying hawks in flight, and his reputation for cautiousness in accepting sightings of unusual birds, lend credence to this record.