

## DOCUMENTATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD

Common Name: Common Black Hawk Scientific Name: *Buteogallus anthracinus*

Dates: Apr. 19, 1985 Time: About 11:30 a.m. to 12:45  
 About 1:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.  
 Apr. 26, 1985 Time: 6:05 p.m. Length of time observed: 10 sec  
 Number: 1 Age: Immature or sub-adult.

Location: Grafton sewage plant and Lee's gravel plant, both at  
 Grafton, Wash. Co., Utah 37°10'N, 113°3'W (Latilong block 19)  
 Elev. 3950 ft.

Distance to bird: Variable, 20 to 100 yards.

Light Conditions: Broken clouds to overcast on Apr. 19. First observation with bird back-lighted (also during photography). The last 20 minutes with bird lighted from the front and at 45 degrees to the right. Sun was down on Apr. 26 sighting.

Optical equipment: 6 X 18 binoculars, 20-60 X spotting scope; 1250 mm. lens on camera.

Weather: Rain in early morning, followed by mostly overcast, with some clearing.

Description: A large hawk, about the size of a Red-tailed. Back showed all blackish-brown, except for the tail, which was striped black and off-white. The breast and belly were streaked, with elongated vertical blotches of the blackish-brown against a buff-colored background. The underside of the tail also showed horizontal streaking, but in a herringbone pattern. The tarsus and toes were bright yellow, with no feather covering. When the bird flew the wings showed great width, extending backward to the tail.

Voice: Not heard.

Behavior: The bird was sitting on a chain-link fence when I first saw it. It sat there for at least 20 minutes while I studied it through the binoculars and spotting scope, and while I got out of the car and set up a camera on a tripod. It then walked to the ground and began picking at something in the graveled roadway. It walked along the roadway, then climbed down among the rocks lining the sewage ponds. A short time later it flew back to the top rail of the fence. After I circled the pond and tried to approach from the opposite direction, it flew to an empty pond a quarter of a mile west. As I drove up the dike the hawk flew across the pond to a utility pole near the gate and sat there until I scared it by leaving the pond.

When I returned about 45 minutes later with my sister, Jewel Gifford, the hawk was back at the largest pond. It circled around us, soaring at a height of 50 to 100 ft. At one point it circled near a cliff just north of the ponds, and was attacked by a pair of ravens. Our last observation of it was when we circled a pond and found it perched on a utility pole about 20 yards distant. We watched it for a while, then backed away, leaving it there.

On Apr. 26 I drove over a rise in the road and found it sitting in the road eating something. Although it was only 10 or 15 yards away, it flew into some nearby trees before I could see anything except the broad wings and striped tail.

Habitat: Sewage disposal plant, with a 12-acre pond in use and a 9-acre pond empty.

Similar Species: Red-tailed Hawk and Golden Eagle are the only ones present at that time of year. Red-tailed Hawk does not have striped tail, has narrower wings, and has the tarsus partly feathered. Wings of the Golden Eagle are much longer, but narrower in proportion. The eagle also has feathered tarsus.

Experience with this species: I have had about two dozen observations of one and two in Springdale, plus many in Arizona and along the west coast of Mexico.

Books used: Golden and Peterson's field guides, used to verify identification at the site.

Description written from memory.

Significance of record: This hawk is a sporadic summer resident in the Zion area, with one pair seen regularly between 1962 and 1975.

Other observers: Jewel A. Gifford  
Box 176  
Springdale, Utah 84767

Date prepared: Apr. 30, 1985.

*Jerome L. Gifford*  
Jerome L. Gifford  
Box 85  
Springdale, Utah 84767