

WEST VIRGINIA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Number: WVBRC 2023-3 Species: Ferruginous Hawk – Hancock Co

Vote (select only one) _X_ For State List _Hypothetical List _Against _Exotic

Reasons voting FOR the record: *(attach more pages if necessary)*

- CM1) The photographs depict a pale hawk that could easily be mistaken for a pale-morph "Kridler's" Red-tailed Hawk. However, the rusty shanks are a field mark that is good for Ferruginous Hawk and rules out any other similar species. To further confirm the identification, this is a bird that had been tracked by GPS for quite some time over a large area of the eastern portion of the continent. After this committee voted to accept records tracked on the MOTUS Wildlife Tracking System, I had no idea it would pay off so soon. Photographs obtained after the bird crossed into West Virginia are certainly an added bonus.
- CM2) The sighting is well described and excellent photographic evidence is provided to document the bird as a Ferruginous Hawk. This is an interesting bird that has a history with the banding and transmitter (<https://www.birdscanada.org/fuo23>). This particular hawk was found injured near Erieau, Canada. It was rescued and rehabbed by the Bluewater Centre for Raptor Rehabilitation. Subsequently, it was banded by Hawk Cliff Raptor Banders (band visible in photographs) and fitted with a small cellular-GPS tag. The bird was released near Wyoming Canada and then began to move toward the US, being detected in several states. The transmitter signal, which is how it was known to be in West Virginia, was picked up by MOTUS and the PI of this project, Stu Mackenzie from Canada, alerted WV birders about the bird being in West Virginia on June 17 via the WV Rare Bird Alert GroupMe forum. That led to a search to find the bird which was then documented by Nathan Rees.
- CM3) Pictures and description are accurate. The carcass was also recovered and is in my possession. USGS band and the harness transmitter were consistent with this individual.
- CM4) Photos are conclusive that this is the female Ferruginous Hawk that was recovered from Erieau, Ontario on May 3rd, 2023, nurtured back to health, banded, tagged with a GPS and released. The MOTUS wildlife tracking system subsequently tracked this bird from Ontario into Ohio, WV and PA between May and late June. You can see the band on the birds led in three of the photos.
- CM5) Accepted.
- CM6) Previously banded and telemeter bird; observer was responding to request to locate. Bird was located and photographed. Photographs present ample evidence for positive I.D.
- CM7) Detailed descriptions, crossed referenced, clear photographs, and the MOTUS data verification.