



IOS IORC <iorcommittee@gmail.com>

Re: Possible "extimus" ssp RSHA sighted in Illinois

1 message

Stacia Novy <[REDACTED]>
To: IORC <iorcommittee@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 6, 2023 at 3:45 PM

PS: I don't think it's a leucistic bird because: 1) the mutation would need to affect the entire body plumage of the bird to achieve an overall "pale" coloration; or 2) the whole, individual feather(s) would need to be affected. [Leucism can be isolated to specific area(s) on the body or affect the entire animal to give a dilute appearance].

Neither condition appears to apply to this hawk because: it has a rufous breast fading to a pale underbelly and head/neck. Black barring can be seen on the underwing of the flying bird, cutting across the whitish background of the wing feathers. It also has dark eyes, so produces melanin, and is not an albino.

I compared photos of extimus RSHA from Florida and some birds have pale breasts, while others show rich rufous breasts. (the degree in deposition of red color has much to do with environmental conditions, molt cycle, diet and genetics so should not be the only indicator used).

Stacia

From: Stacia Novy
Sent: Saturday, August 5, 2023 5:11 PM
To: IORC <iorcommittee@gmail.com>
Subject: Possible "extimus" ssp RSHA sighted in Illinois

Dear IOS and Geoff Williamson,

I saw a very pale morph, adult red-shouldered hawk perched at Pyramid State Park, IL yesterday. See pics. (taken with my iPhone out the car window, so sorry for the unprofessional look). The pics show the description identified below. I included a shot of the raptor flying away so you can see the translucent "crescent" on the wing of a RSHA.

It is not a leucistic bird, as the pale coloration occurs throughout the body and makes the overall color appear "diluted". The head is whitish-gray, the wings have a whitish background color with black markings, and the chest is a light pinkish/cinnamon color. The red "shoulder" is a light reddish color too.

This morph is identical to the south Florida subspecies "extimus". I had my field guide, showing the various subspecies of red-shouldered hawks, and compared images on the spot. I don't know if avian subspecies are noteworthy for the records committee, but just thought to pass along the photos and info. Let me know what you think?

Thanks, Stacia Novy