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THE OCCURRENCE OF MELANISM IN THE BROAD WINGED HAWK.

(*Buteo latissimus*.)

BY B. H. BAILEY.

During the fall of 1907 Mr. James Ward of Britt, Iowa, sent to the Coe College Museum a hawk of the Genus *Buteo*, that, because of its color, was difficult to identify. It was so similar to a specimen seen by the writer in the collection of mounted birds at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, that at the suggestion of Mr. W. E. C. Todd of the Carnegie Museum at Pittsburg, it was sent to Mr. Robert Ridgway of the National Museum at Washington, where both these gentlemen affirmed that it is a Broad Winged Hawk in melanistic plumage.

This is the second melanistic Broad Winged Hawk that has been described. The description of the one in the Smithsonian collection, written by Mr. Robert Ridgway, appeared in Vol. IX, Proceedings of the U. S. National Museum, pp. 248-249.

Our specimen was hurriedly prepared and owing to shot wounds it was impossible to determine the sex of the bird. The color of the iris was not noted. The stomach contained the fragments of a frog partially digested, and the foreleg of a frog was found in the crop.

Description: Melanistic *Buteo latissimus* (Wils). Sex (?) Fall 1907, Eagle Lake (Hancock Lake), Hancock county, Iowa. Collector, Mr. James Ward, Coe College Museum. Head, neck, body and tibial flags, sooty brown with a slightly rufous cast due to very faint rufous edgings on the feathers. Back, and top of the head, somewhat darker. The feathers of the upper surfaces of the wings slightly worn and somewhat lighter at their margins. Concealed bases of feathers of the head, snow white; elsewhere bases of the feathers grayish white. Each feather shows a distinct black shaft. Under tail coverts when disturbed show three or four alternating light and dark bands.

In this specimen, as in the one described by Mr. Ridgway, there is a slightly chalky cast to the plumage when viewed in strong daylight, which I attribute to the effect of the underlying grayish white bases of the feathers.

Wings: Three outer primaries deeply emarginate on the inner webs. Lining of wings in general the same color as the body, except at the bases of the first three or four primaries of each wing, where there are a very few whitish feathers, each crossed by about four dusky bands.

Exposed parts of the primaries dusky above with no evident banding; below, however, they are whitish on the inner webs, and crossed by five narrow dark bars. The tips of the primaries from below for an inch and a half appear almost black. Spreading the secondaries they show from above, on their inner webs, sharp contrasting bars of white and dusky, which appear much less distinct on the under surface.

Tail: Exposed surface above crossed by three dark bars of the same color as the back, which alternate with two narrower grayish white bands with a narrow tip of the same color. From below, these markings are less distinct. The inner webs of the outermost tail feathers show more numerous indistinct bars.

Measurements: Wing, 11.62; tail, 7.18; Culmen, 1.10; depth of bill at base, .62 tarsus, 2.44; middle toe, 1.40.

In his description, Mr. Ridgway says, "The melanistic plumage of *Buteo latissimus* having remained hitherto unknown, so far as the writer is aware, the following description is presented of a specimen recently acquired by the National Museum from Mr. J. W. Preston, of Baxter, Iowa. It is the only example which the writer has seen, or indeed heard of, except two others seen by Mr. Preston, as recorded farther on."

It is interesting to note that these melanistic birds, the one described by Mr. Ridgway and the one herein described, together with the two seen by Mr. Preston, were all in the same county in Iowa, and within an area, the diameter of which is not more than ten miles.