



Al-Asad au Natural



Special Edition # 2

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Al Asad Observation Adds New Bird to Official Iraq Bird List!



*Always Right,
Sustain the Fight!*

371st SB

Send your photos, questions, and submissions to MAJ Rogers at: randel.rogers@aa.mnf-wiraq.usmc.mil

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Bird Species Identified on Al Asad to Date:

115



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On March 17th at 1530, I was walking into the office when a large hawk swooping across the valley from the ridge behind the DFAC caught my attention. Through my binoculars, I could immediately see that this was an accipiter (a family of hawks), and was struck by how big of a bird it was. I judged it to be larger than the black-and-white Hooded crows often seen on base, and 2 other people standing there agreed. I was able to get a good look at it as it made a couple of circles and finally passed almost overhead, and recognized it as a Goshawk. Goshawks can be fairly common north of Iraq, and have been rumored to sometimes migrate further south, but no documented records existed for this species in Iraq and it was not on the offi-

cial list maintained by the Iraq Bird Records Committee. After checking my observation against information in "Birds of the Middle East" and online, I confirmed that the only reasonable species of accipiter in this area of that size would be the Goshawk, and that all of my observations were

Goshawks can be seen in Ohio, usually along Lake Erie or at The Wilds near Zanesville. Some Ohio reports are mis-identified Coopers hawks, but a few legitimate Goshawks are recorded each winter.

consistent for that species. I then completed a form used to report rare birds to the Ornithological Society of the Middle East and submitted it to that organization and Nature Iraq. The record was peer reviewed by the members of the Iraq Bird Records Committee and they voted to accept the record and officially add Goshawk to the Iraq list. Prior to this addition, Birdlife International



listed 415 species in Iraq, and as more areas are surveyed and more Iraqis become involved in bird-watching, this number will undoubtedly grow!

Each state, region, or country has an official bird records committee whose job is to keep the official species list and decide if sightings of rare birds are sufficiently documented to be recognized as official records.