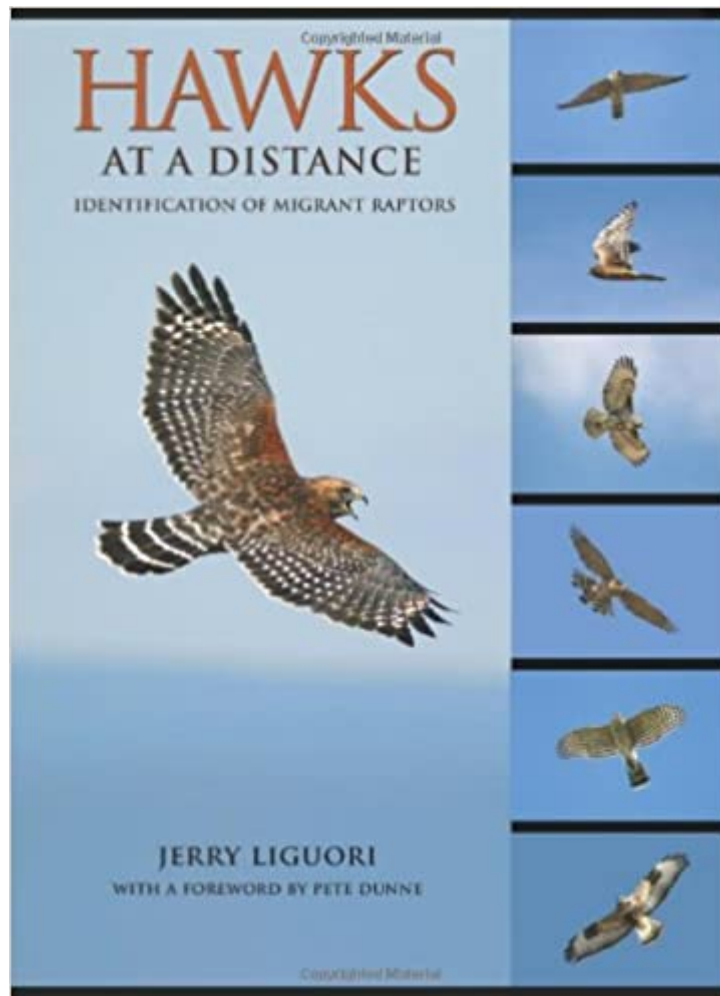




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Hawks At A Distance: Identification Of Migrant Raptors



Synopsis

The ultimate must-have guide for identifying migrant raptors, *Hawks at a Distance* is the first volume to focus on distant raptors as they are truly seen in the field. Jerry Liguori, a leading expert on North American raptors, factors in new information and approaches for identifying twenty-nine species of raptor in various lighting situations and settings. The field guide's nineteen full-color portraits, 558 color photos, and 896 black-and-white images portray shapes and plumages for each species from all angles. Useful flight identification criteria are provided and the accompanying text discusses all aspects of in-flight hawk identification, including flight style and behavior. Concentrating on features that are genuinely observable at a distance, this concise and practical field guide is ideal for any aspiring or experienced hawk enthusiast. The first guide to focus on distant raptors as they are viewed in the field. New information and approaches for identifying distant raptors. Illustrates twenty-nine species in various lighting situations and settings. 558 color photos and 896 black-and-white images depicting plumage and shape characteristics. All aspects of in-flight hawk identification, including flight style and behavior.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"If you love watching hawks, Liguori's *Hawks at a Distance* is an essential aid which will help build your identification skills."--Wayne Mones, *Audubon Magazine* "A must-have for raptor people!"--Ian Paulsen, *Birdbooker Report* "Possibly the best-ever raptor identification guide in print. . . . If you are serious about identifying birds of prey, whether at a hawk-watch site, or during your everyday

birding, the advances made by the author with this book can assist you in achieving that goal in ways few books have done previously. . . . Highly recommended."--William P. Mueller, Bluebird's Laugh

"Hawks at a Distance is an advanced study written by an authority in raptors. Mr. Liguori's book is great to be read with attention and what you learn you will treasure greatly if you are an active birder."--H.J. Ruiz, My Backyard Visitors

"This is an absolute 'must have' for anyone who has ever even briefly wondered, 'What kind of hawk was that?' . . . Practical and beautiful. . . . If you have even the slightest interest in birds, you should own this book."--Alan Speakman, eBirdseed.com

"Jerry Liguori has found a way to communicate to birders of all ages and skill levels how he can identify hawks at a distance. He provides us with a study tool that is the next best thing to being with him atop a ridge near a hawk flyway. . . . By putting in the work to study these photos and internalizing the helpful text explaining what is shown in each photo, you would be ready to join a hawk-watch group and dazzle them with your advanced skills."--Robert Mortensen, Birding is Fun

"This book has a lot to offer hawk watchers of all levels of experience."--A Charm of Finches

"Hawks at a Distance is a neat little book and valuable reference."--Angus Wilson, OceanWanderers Book Shelf

"A remarkable and important field guide."--Greg Laden, Science blogs

"Every birder with an interest in hawks should own this book. And really, what birder isn't interested in hawks? Show me a birder that doesn't enjoy an afternoon at a good hawk-watch, and I'll show you a dog that doesn't like cheese."--Greg Niese, North American Birding

"Hawks at a Distance provides a great way to look at shape and form of raptors, and not just plumage. . . . Hawks at a Distance is for all birders, not just hawk aficionados. The ability to identify hawks at a distance is crucial to all bird counts and to all birding situations."--Birdfreak.com

"Liguori's innovation is to show these magnificent birds as you most often actually see them--in flight and at a distance. He does show one close-up shot of most of the species, but he follows that with many shots of the bird in action from different angles. Studying these excellent pictures gives one a sense of the shape of the bird, which is one of the most indicative traits for identification, and it allows you to see those obvious field marks that might actually be seen from a great distance."--The Nature of Things

"If you have any interest in hawk watching you need this book. . . . It truly is a revolutionary guide and will certainly be a tool for teaching many a hawk watcher in the coming years. I would tell even the most seasoned of birders to add this to their collection. . . . [It] will surely be one of, if not the most influential hawk watching guide ever."--Utah Birders

"Certainly a book for aspiring as well as veteran hawk-watchers."--Rosyfinch Ramblings

"All-in-all, this book is a must have for any hawk watcher or any birder that wants to learn more about hawk identification. I am in love with the book and haven't been able to put it down for a few weeks now. I would recommend that you use this

book in combination with Jerry Liguori's first book, *Hawks from Every Angle*. These two books are, and will be for quite some time, the bibles of hawk watching."--Drew Weber, *Nemesis Bird*"Concise and easy to follow. . . . Will be an invaluable tool if you are a hawk watcher."--Birds from Behind"I heartily recommend this book to North American raptor enthusiasts, but also to anyone with a general interest in raptors, but especially for birders planning a birding trip to North America where it will sit happily in a pocket or rucksack next to a less specific field guide."--Phil Slade, *Another Bird Blog*"A useful tool that would be a welcome addition to any birders library."--Scott Arvin, *The Cardinal, Indiana Audubon Society*"This book certainly gives a new perspective, and hope, to viewing those 'too-far-to-identify' raptors. The raptor enthusiast and the avid birder who's always trying to expand his knowledge of advanced identification tips will appreciate this book."--Avian Review"For anyone that spends time at our local hawkwatch at Lighthouse Point, this latest book from author and photographer Jerry Liguori, entitled *Hawks at a Distance* is a must-have!"--Naturescape Images"Liguori's new book gives the would-be hawkwatcher a head start, significantly closing the gap between rookie and expert with his simple and comprehensive approach. . . . Hawkwatchers are going to be the primary audience for this book, but anyone interested in pushing the physical boundaries of their bird identification to the horizon should pick it up. You won't be disappointed."--The Drinking Bird"If you love raptors Liguori's new book will be an essential tool in advancing your identification skills"--Sierra Activist"This follow-up to *Hawks from Every Angle* is jam-packed with all aspects of in-flight hawk identification tips."--Nina Harfmann, *Nature Remains*"*Hawks at a Distance: Identification of Migrant Raptors* by Jerry Liguori is an exceptional book. I have always wanted to become better at raptor identification and Liguori hit the nail on the head for me with this book. . . . If you want to progress to the next level of birding I think *Hawks at a Distance* will help you along."--Flying Mullet"[The guide] uses digital photography to present the birds as we might see them in real life. Liguori focuses on twenty-nine species of raptor, depicting their flight patterns and the color of their plumage as it varies with background light; there's also a very useful series of images in black and white of the raptors from various angles."--Fannie Peczenik, *Pittsburgh Bird Watching Examiner*"Raptor fans, and especially anyone who spends time at hawk watches, will definitely want a copy of Liguori's *Hawks at a Distance*. It's quite simply the best guide to hawks at, well, a distance. [It will] be useful to any birder due to its different approach and the encouragement it gives to push the limits of our identification skills to the horizon (literally)."--Grant McCreary, *Birder's Library*"You not only get a series of very small images--just what you'd see with your binoculars trained on the high flyer, but also a good close image too. Between the two you can see how the ID features are likely to seem in the field and learn how to do

without the close up and make a pretty good stab at what that bird is kettling up to the heavens."--Fat Birder"If you love hawk watching and want to get beyond accipiter vs. buteo, then you should definitely look at Hawks at a Distance."--Anne Hanley, Trumpler"Hawks at a Distance does a better job of putting names to those dots over the next ridge than anything else that's out there."--Ned Keller, The Cerulean"Considerable forethought took place at the conception of the idea for this book, because it is easy to read and to understand, making it a viable resource for the beginner and the experienced birder alike."--KaHolly Blog"This book helps me understand raptors in ways I never thought possible. . . . Liguori's knowledge and skill of identifying raptors is simply unsurpassed. His ability to tie together actual knowledge with photos makes for both an informative and yet concise book."--Cory Gregory's Birding Blog"Birders schooled in the old 'field marks' method of bird identification will find Liguori's Hawks at a Distance startling--and ultimately, I think, revelatory."--Rick Wright, ABA blog"For those of you wishing to push your hawk-watching skills to new levels, grab your binoculars and get a copy as soon as you can!"--Digiscoping Blog"Hawks at a Distance offers bird watchers of all experience levels the opportunity to learn a skill that has long been considered a prized specialty. Extensive color photographs supplemented with black-and-white illustrated shape charts depict the various raptors commonly found in the U.S. and Canada in a host of flight positions. By presenting these with detailed descriptions of flight patterns and aerial habits, Liguori has created what is quite likely the definitive book on the subject presently in print."--John Riutta, Bird Watcher's Digest"This slim volume is an excellent addition to any library, but will be particularly welcomed by bird watchers wishing to improve their identification skills. . . . Hawk watchers along migration corridors will certainly take this guide to their favorite hawk-watch station. But other bird watchers should consider adding it to their collection, where it will get much use."--Choice"The beauty of Hawks at a Distance is that you can drill down through the different levels of text, taking in as much detail as you can handle at your level. . . . All in all, this is an excellent, compact guide that nicely complements Hawks From Every Angle."--Donna Lynn Schulman, 10,000 Birds blog"[An] excellent guide. . . . [T]he text is to the point and littered with little nuggets of useful information that, from my experience, only years in the field would elicit."--Luke Tiller, Birdwatch"Study Jerry Liguori's excellent book, Hawks at a Distance, with its hundreds of photos of raptors in flight. I've found this book to be very helpful in providing identification clues."--Val Cunningham, Star Tribune

"Jerry Liguori's book takes the hawk identification guide to a whole new level. It is hard to imagine the amount of time that went into this book--countless hours on mountaintops and other

hawk-watching sites taking the photographs, then selecting and arranging them. The result is simply the best collection of hawk ID photos ever assembled, combined with Liguori's clear and concise identification tips. This book is a gold mine of information for anyone interested in hawk identification."--David Sibley, author of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*"Liguori has done it again. Fresh on the heels of his highly acclaimed *Hawks from Every Angle*, we now have the new *Hawks at a Distance*. He never missed a beat. Not only did he pick up where he left off, he has taken it to a higher plane. This twenty-first-century offering does for raptors what the seminal *Ducks at a Distance* did for waterfowl in the mid-twentieth century. It makes a quantum leap in the complex art and science of hawk identification, taming these shape-shifters like never before."--Clay Sutton, coauthor of *Hawks in Flight*"Jerry Liguori presents an innovative concept tackling the age-old problem of identifying flying raptors when seen under field-viewing conditions. Optimal grasp of each species and age class is obtained with a multitude of photographs depicting various flight modes and lighting conditions of dorsal, ventral, and head-on views. The concise text is easy to read and very informative. Liguori's field identification prowess is impeccable and is articulated throughout this guide."--Brian K. Wheeler, author of *Raptors of Western North America* and *Raptors of Eastern North America*"Finally a raptor identification guide that depicts hawks the way you are likely to see them--at a distance! Liguori's unique approach to raptor identification will help birders quickly focus on the field marks that matter, to understand broad plumage patterns, and ultimately extend their reach and abilities as hawk-watchers. This guide is an absolute must for anyone interested in raptors, and will become an instant classic among hawk-watching enthusiasts."--Brian Sullivan, eBird project leader, Cornell Lab of Ornithology"This book is a winner. The spectacular, cutting-edge photos effectively highlight important aspects of raptors in flight and are simply mind-boggling. This is the one guide that almost everyone will take to the field."--Keith Bildstein, Sarkis Acopian Director of Conservation Science, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary"Clear and concise, I found all the information presented in this book to be accurate and accessible for both neophyte and more experienced hawk-watchers. I congratulate the author for coming up with such wonderfully illustrative photographs."--Tony Leukering, senior ornithologist, Geo-Marine Inc."An intriguing concept--take a few hundred of the most distant, silhouetted, weird angle photos and combine them into a field guide. . . . Very useful to raptor enthusiasts and hawk counters!"--Christian Artuso

Our time must be considered the golden age of book publishing as it relates to hawks, especially North American raptors (the words hawks and raptors pretty much used interchangeably by their enthusiasts). There are so many very excellent books available for every aspect of raptor

identification. There are general reference and field guides dedicated to them (like Peterson's or the Princeton guide), excellent photographic guides (the Wheeler guides), books that focus on their migration and books that can be used to identify them in flight (like Sutton's book or Liguori's other excellent book, "Hawks From Every Angle", Hawks from Every Angle: How to Identify Raptors In Flight) and I own them all. This book is for the individual who wants to identify hawks in at a distance, in flight, with binoculars. These individuals could be hawkwatchers, birdwatchers, raptor enthusiasts, general nature enthusiasts, etc. But the key here is that the book is meant to assist you with identifying the birds at a distance, in flight and with binoculars. If you do not fall into that category, the book will have limited use. But if you do, this is a gold mine and there is nothing like it. Put together over the career of perhaps the premier North American hawkwatcher, this book does what no other book does. You see the hawks from the many common angles of flight (like "head on" or "soaring", "gliding", "dihedral", even "modified dihedral") and those pictures are coupled with descriptions of the many subtleties that you will actually see during observation that will help you distinguish your identification, often taking into consideration the time of day or if the subject is backlit by the sun (ex: the fact that it is almost impossible to tell a juvenile Harrier from an adult female Harrier if they are backlit, or the fact that "many adult female [Harriers] have golden tones on their head" or "at sundown, adult male [Harriers] can appear rufous underneath"). The value of these excellent pictures with the Liguori's unmatched knowledge/experience/talent resulting in the corresponding text cannot be overstated. This book is a monumental accomplishment. I can only hope it stays in print for many years to come. It is the type of book that really needs to stay in print for decades.

This volume has two great strengths. (1) It brings together an excellent collection of photographs to show the wide variety of ways that birds of prey can actually look in flight. (2) It has b&w collections in the back that combine on single pages the many postures of each species in flight. Unfortunately, it also has two great weaknesses. (1) The text is very poorly organized and seems to lack a sense of prioritization. (2) The captions on the photographic pages are, likewise, in need of a good edit. For someone who has already read and studied Hawks in Flight by Pete Dunne, David Sibley & Clay Sutton (which has a magnificent text), this is a good self-study guide. It provides the images to help the advanced student practice at home what she or he has learned from Hawks in Flight. It is definitely not the place to start learning how to identify flying birds of prey, though.

BASICS: softcover, 2011, 192pp; nearly 600 small color photos show 29 of the expected 34 species

of the hawk/falcon family in the US; all photos show the birds in flight and at a distance; a full-page photo is given for 19 of the raptors; 1-3 pages of text on each bird focuses on describing two things: the bird's flight pattern/behavior and the bird's various plumages. This is a rather unique book that takes the unconventional approach of purposely basing the entire work on not just small, but on tiny photographs. If that seems unorthodox or even unwise, it is the tiny nature of the photos that is paramount to the aim of this book. For those of you who've seen the author's previous work, "Hawks from Every Angle", just imagine opening that book again but standing 15 feet away to look at the photos. If you have not seen it, simply think back to a time when an apparently small raptor soared high in the air and then multiply that experience by 600 more birds of the same smallness; and, then put them all into one book for your identification enjoyment -- and practice. This book addresses a narrow niche of identification, which is done by providing a myriad of photographs that show a distant raptor from below, above, and head on. In all, 29 of the expected 34 species in the US are examined. Greater attention is given to 20 of these raptors. These primary 20 birds are shown with a range of 9 photos (Gyr Falcon) to 79 photos (Red-tailed Hawk) and accompanied by 1-3 pages of text. The other 9 species have considerably less material with just 1-6 photos and 1-2 paragraphs of text each. In case you're wondering, the five species not included in this book are Harris's Hawk, Common Black-Hawk, Gray Hawk, Snail Kite, and the more restricted Aplomado Falcon. These exclusions will be a disappointment to birders of the Southwest since three of these birds are routine sightings in the region. In all, there are nearly 600 color photographs, all of which show the birds in flight. A very nice full-page photo is given for all but one of the primary 20 species covered (no big photo for the Gyr Falcon). At first glance, the small photos are...umm...tiny. The majority are between 1 and 1.5 cm from wing tip to wing tip. But, that feature is the very point of this book. What the author does is to draw your attention to the subtle, critical features that are present when you know where to look. With these subtle identification points, you are being shown how to identify the bird not only to species, but often to gender, age, and subspecies for some (e.g., Merlin and Peregrine Falcon). The text for each bird focuses on only two things: Flight mannerisms and plumage variations. Regarding the flight mannerisms, the writing style is straight forward, almost as if the author is standing next to you in the field as he tries to point out the key features when you ask, "What's that speck soaring over there?" Not surprisingly, much of this information is subjective and garnered from considerable time and experience of observing these birds. As an example, Merlins are described as "...have stout chests, broader-based wings, and slightly broader, shorter tails." Another note says, "...have shorter wings and slim, short tails that are typically square-tipped when folded, lacking a taper toward the tip." Without photos to help demonstrate what this means,

this can be difficult to convey to some people -- almost like trying to describe the difference between the musical notes of C-sharp and a D-sharp without making any sounds. A very nice job is done describing the various plumages which cover ages, genders, races, and phases. These descriptions often go into fine detail and are typically compared against similar features found in other raptors. Since the descriptions refer to variously named parts of the bird, it would be wise to become familiar with the terminology by reading the terms defined in the introduction; and, to examine the adjacent photos of a soaring hawk that have the body parts labeled. As in the author's prior raptor book, the more critical notes are emphasized with bold text. These are the key features the author believes you should memorize. Included in the back of the book are 19 separate plates, each showcasing the in-flight shapes of one of the primary raptors (again, Gyrfalcon is not included). Each "shapes" plate is composed of a busy collage of 40-50 silhouette-like images of the bird. These show the bird at different angles and with the wings held in different positions. The images are well organized to help quickly scan over the many shapes and positions possible in the field. As one small critique, it would have been nice to show the more similar species side-by-side in the color photographs (e.g., Cooper's/Sharp-shinned or Peregrine/Prairie). This would have helped to see what was meant by describing one bird as being broader, thicker, narrower, more tapered, less squared, etc. than the other. The current layout requires you to flip back and forth between pages; and, to match up similar poses to get a fair comparison. However, it should be pointed out that some comparisons are possible with the "shape plates" found in the back of the book. Although some flipping of pages will still be necessary, at least the two pairings noted above are positioned to face each other on opposite pages. This book certainly gives a new perspective, and hope, to viewing those "too-far-to-identify" raptors. The raptor enthusiast and the avid birder who's always trying to expand his knowledge of advanced identification tips will appreciate this book. However, this book may not be for every birder. Just because the photos aren't moving and you can stare at them without time limits, the subtleties of the features may still be frustrating. This book probably should not be considered as a starting point for the typical new birder who simply wants to know the name of that raptor soaring up in the sky. The difficulty of distinguishing the features of a distant bird may be even more basic than just a kestrel versus a Merlin. The newer birder may first need to determine if that soaring or zipping bird is a falcon or a sometimes similar dove. A foundation of observant birding should first have been practiced before trying to absorb what this book attempts to teach. It's a new facet of material to learn and, for the right birder, will be enjoyed. - (written by Jack, shown with sample pages at Avian Review, April 2011)

I've listed several related books below...

- 1) *Hawks from Every Angle* by Liguori
- 2) *Hawks in Flight* by

Dunne/Sibley/Sutton3)Ã A Field Guide to Hawks of North AmericaÃ A by Clark/Wheeler4)Ã A A Photographic Guide to North American RaptorsÃ A by Wheeler/Clark5)Ã A Raptors of Western North AmericaÃ A by Wheeler6)Ã A Raptors of Eastern North AmericaÃ A by Wheeler7)Ã A Raptors of New MexicoÃ A by Cartron

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