

Red-tailed Hawk Wintering on the Beach at Gulfport

Judy Toups

4 Hartford Place  
Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

From early January through late February 1977, an immature Red-tailed Hawk (Buteo jamaicensis) resided along the beach at Gulfport, Harrison County, Mississippi. While many Red-tails winter in the area, this one was unusual because of his residence along the beach within the city limits of Gulfport and very near busy Highway 90. He consistently perched on a piling which was about 15 feet above the mud at low tide and was about 20 feet out in the Gulf of Mexico at high tide (Fig. 1). The piling on which the hawk perched was adjacent to a restaurant and many rats have been seen

in the area. Perhaps the Red-tail was taking advantage of this food supply. An immature Red-tail also occasionally used a crane at a construction site on the beach as a perch from which to hunt. Residents of the area reported that two hawks had been seen in the area.

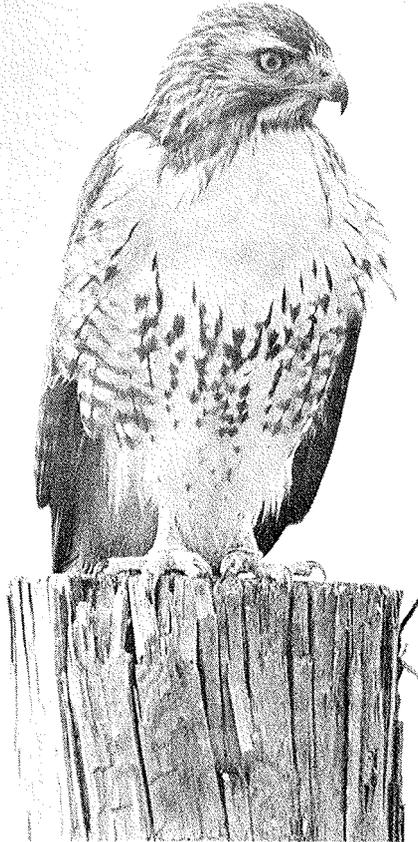


Figure 1. An immature Red-tailed Hawk perched on a piling on the beach at Gulfport. (Photo by Vernon Matthews)