

CAPRIMULGIFORMES

(Nightjars)

Nightjars



Family CAPRIMULGIDAE (Nighthawks) Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*)

Measurements:

Length: 9" Wing Span: 22"

Average Weight: 1.8 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

dark brown overall with lighter mottling; small bill; distinctive white bars on underwings close to wingtips; long, slightly forked tail; (m) white throat; (f) buffy throat; otherwise no sexual dimorphism

Notes:

common; mostly solitary; native to dry, open territory from sw U.S. s through Mexico and CA, into SA; generally crepuscular and nocturnal, though occasionally seen foraging in daylight, but rarely seen when perched or roosting; insectivorous, catching prey on the wing

Mojave presence: summer range



Hualapai Plateau; AZ



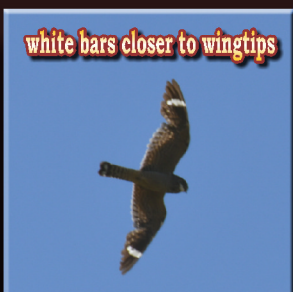
Hualapai Plateau; AZ



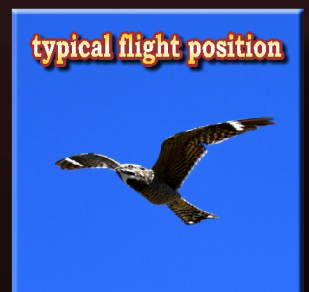
Overton WMA; Overton, NV



Hualapai Plateau; AZ



white bars closer to wingtips



typical flight position



hunting high into the night



white throat patch visible

Comments:

Very difficult to distinguish from Common Nighthawk; slightly smaller size, fork in tail shallower, wingtips less pointed, wingbars closer to tips than bend in wing (all impractical to distinguish in field observations); prefers to fly closer to ground than Common Nighthawk--however, small loose-knit groups such as these birds at Corn Creek in the [Desert National Wildlife Refuge](#) nw of Las Vegas, NV, were hunting in the early evening to nearly dark high overhead, much like the Common Nighthawk, which can lead to confusing misidentification!