

The diary of a Rough-legged Hawk in Europe

Jens-Kjeld Jensen



Adult female dark morph Rough-legged Hawk *Buteo lagopus sanctijohannis* corpse, Hvalvík, Streymoy, Faeroe Islands, April 2008 (Jens-Kjeld Jensen). From 350 miles out into the Atlantic off Newfoundland in September 2003, this bird was ship-assisted to the Faeroe Islands, held in care there until May 2006, when it was released in Shetland, where it stayed until at least March 2007, and finally made its way back to the Faeroe Islands, where its adventures came to a sticky end. On inspection, the bird was an adult female and it had bred – presumably before it arrived in Europe.

A dark morph Rough-legged Hawk *Buteo lagopus sanctijohannis* (the North American form of Rough-legged Buzzard), which landed on a fishing boat about 350 miles east Newfoundland on 13th September 2003, was taken into care in Tórshavn, Faeroe Islands, until it was released from a ferry east of the Isle of Noss, Shetland, on 5th May 2006. Before its release, it was fitted with a metal bird ring (number 3042622) from the Zoological Museum of Denmark. It was found at the Knab, Lerwick, Shetland, the same day it was released, and it was seen there again the following day, and again at Wester Quarff, Shetland, on 14th May (*Birding World* 16: 456 & 19: 208-209).

There were then further sightings of the bird in Shetland in 2006: at Clousta on 26th May, in the Tingwall area during late July and early August, and then around Channerwick and Levenwick

from 2nd October into early 2007 (*Shetland Bird Report* 2006). The last sighting of it on Shetland appears to have been on 2nd March 2007, when it was watched eating a Woodcock in a garden at Cunningsburgh (www.nature-shetland.co.uk).

On 1st April 2008, this same, ringed Rough-legged Hawk was found dead on the Faeroe Islands, at Hvalvík, Streymoy – only about 22km from where it was held in captivity in Tórshavn during 2003-2006. The flight feathers were worn and the body feathers were somewhat 'glued', apparently with the same unidentified substance as the Rough-legged Hawk which was found moribund just 11km from this bird on 6th April 2002 (*Birding World* 16: 20-21).

Jens-Kjeld Jensen, Faeroe Islands.

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