



A Rough-legged Hawk off Greenland

Jens-Kjeld Jensen



Juvenile female Rough-legged Hawk *Buteo lagopus sanctijohannis* corpse, c.55km southwest of Greenland and c.610km east of Baffin Island, September 2001 (*Jens-Kjeld Jensen*). Note the similarities between this bird and the potential Rough-legged Hawks recorded in Europe, including the bird on Iceland in 2000 (see *Birding World* 13: 441 and 14: 439-440 & 448). The plumage is rather plain above, heavily patterned and richly pigmented below, and virtually lacks pale notches in the wing coverts.

On 25th September 2001, a Rough-legged Hawk *Buteo lagopus sanctijohannis* landed on the Faeroese trawler *Arctic Viking* at about 64°30'N 53°05'W, which is c.55km southwest of Greenland and c.610km east of Baffin Island. Marius Johannesen took the bird into care, but by the next day it had died. Marius stored the corpse in a freezer and showed it to me when the trawler returned to the Faeroe Islands in late April 2002.

This bird immediately reminded me of the presumed Rough-legged Hawks reported in the Western Palearctic in autumn 2001: singles on the Isles of Scilly and in County Galway, Ireland, in October and four in the Azores between

October and December (*Birding World* 14: 439-440, 448 & 15: 18). It was nowhere near so far from the breeding range, of course, but it does seem to provide further evidence that transatlantic vagrancy is a real possibility for last autumn's birds.

My examination of the corpse indicated that it was a juvenile female and I took the following biometrics: weight 750g, wing 440mm, tail 232 mm and culmen 22.4mm.

Jens-Kjeld Jensen, Nólsoy, Faeroe Islands.

There is no doubt that Rough-legged Hawks are reaching Europe, but are dark morphs being overlooked as Common Buzzards? One dark morph was found moribund in Iceland on 29th April 1980 (at Fagrahlið i Fljótshlið, Rang). *Eds.*

