

Ann Johnson

From: Mark Orsag [MOrsag@doane.edu]
Sent: Thursday, November 11, 1999 5:19 PM
To: 'Ann Johnson'
Subject: RE: Plegadis Ibis sp.

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Ann,

I'll include some field notes on three of the four Prairie Falcon sightings below (Oct 23,24, and Nov 7). I was not at the watch on Nov 1 when the other sighting occurred; I'll contact the two people involved in that one about forwarding notes to you.

I am very much hoping for a Ferruginous this year, but I think that we will have to get some real winter weather first...

The first one of these was a bit complicated...

Adult Prairie Falcon (October 23-- 5:05pm)
Obs: Mark Orsag, Sue Mattix, Don Maas

Seemingly appearing out of nowhere, this bird was spotted by Don Maas as it whizzed past the Lodge deck going north. Dorsal surface observation only. Plumage light brown dark beige; large falcon with "jointed and pointed" wings but blunt tips. Brownish coloration was lighter on back and darker toward primaries. No bands or barring visible on tail's upper surface. Fast driving flight not wandering or tilting. Wings thin-appearing and wingbeat centered at midwing. Bird was momentarily lost from sight but then reacquired across the valley heading south down Westridge. With an impressive display of speed, the bird covered the large expanse of Westridge rapidly. Powered flight all the way except for one very brief glide and half-soar. Tube-shape of body was noted as was clean upper chest. Under-wing pattern consistent with the trademark "pits" was finally observed during the soar.

Immature Prairie Falcon (October 24-- 4:20pm)

Obs: Mark Orsag, Jim Meyer

While observing from Overlook 1, we spotted a large falcon coming right at us very fast and low. I got my binoculars on it. I saw the "block and mustache" facial pattern first, the streaked underparts second and the somewhat misnamed "pits" third. 1-2-3 gone!

Adult Prairie Falcon (Nov 7-- 2:20pm)
Obs: Mark Orsag, Sue Mattix, Howard Mattix

Howard and I were at the Lodge when Sue called us on the radio to tell us that something she hadn't been able to call was headed right over the Lodge. Passing over at medium height, this individual loped south as if in no particular hurry. "Pits", translucent flight feathers and clean upper chest/lightly spotted lower chest were noted. Rare nice look at a species that is often moving too low and too fast to see well...

Mark O