

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION  
OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

*doc. of  
Sighting reported  
Adet PP in  
IBL Summary*

1. Species: Merlin ..... 2. Number 1 .....
3. Location: 1/3 mi. north of Calamus, Ia. .....
4. Date: Feb. 6, 1978 ..... 5. Time bird seen: 3:45 P.M. to .....
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what was seen in the field); approximatley one foot in length, dark brown back and wings, tail dull brown bars, tips of wings when folded about halfway down tail, top of head dark brown, side of face mottled appearance, brown specks on lighter breast, small hooked beak
7. Description of voice if heard: not heard
8. Description of behavior: only observed while sitting on line, remained relatively motionless
9. Habitat- general: open country-cornfields, grass ditches, one wooded ditch  
specific: sitting on wire over fence line between snowcovered road ditch and cornfield
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain: Kestrel-eliminated because of size and lack of rufous coloring and black facial pattern  
Sharp-shinned hawk - eliminated because tail not long, not near any large wooded area
11. Distance (how measured)? .....
12. Optical equipment: none .....
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you) overcast, I would have been between the bird and the sun
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: I have seen many Kestrels along the roadsides, and have seen only two sharp-shins.
15. Other observers: none
16. Did others agree with your identification? .....
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Peterson, Roger Tory, A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS, 1947  
Robins, Chandler S., Bertel Bruun, and Herbert S. Zim, BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA

Confirmed what I thought I had observed.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?  
one month

Signature *Bob Bryant* ..... Address ..... RR 1 Box 155  
Date: Mar. 9, 1978 ..... Calamus, Ia. 52729 .....