

ILLINOIS

DOCUMENTATION FORM FOR UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTINGS
 SUBMITTED TO ILLINOIS ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE (I.O.R.C.)
 This form submitted as supporting documentation of (check all that apply):

I.O.R.C. RECORD NUMBER

- Unusual species; Unusual date; Unusual number;
 Unusual plumage; Unusual breeding record; Christmas Count record; Spring Count record;
 Breeding Census record; Other: _____

1. Species: Merlin

2. Number of birds: 1 Age/sex/plumage: Adult

3. Date(s): Sat. Dec. 27, 1997

4. Location (incl. County): Andover, IA. Jackson Co. Iowa.

5. Observers: Corey Blevins Ann Barker
 Your name: Brian L. Blevins Phone: (319) 324-7326

Mailing address: 2003 East 12th Street Davenport IA. 52803

Others agreeing with identification: Corey Blevins, Ann Barker

Observers NOT agreeing with identification: None

6. Physical description (size, shape, proportions, details of both color and pattern on the head, back, breast, undertail, wings, and tail; coloration of bill, eye, legs and feet) of details actually seen in the field:

We first spotted the bird as a kestrel or accipiter. As we got closer the bird was definitely a falcon (kestrel or Merlin). The size was larger and plumper than kestrel; in fact I suspect the bird to be a female by its larger size. This bird had very, very dull plumage unlike most merlins we see down the Mississippi Valley. It was much more like the birds we see in the Black Hills or in the Prairie region of Saskatchewan. The bird had heavy banding on the tail, not so much in color but in contrast since the rest of her was so light.

Species: _____ Date seen: _____ Observer: _____

7. Description of behavior: It perched as a Kestrel or small falcon. It bobbed its head in falcon like manner when we got out of the car, and it definitely flew with the heavier (unlike Kestrel) falcon flight.
8. Description of vocalizations: None
9. Description of immediate and surrounding habitat(s): OPEN country, the bird was in only tree at farm house where he was watching smaller birds at a pole birdfeeder.
10. Viewing conditions:
Optical equipment (type, power): Bright Sunny Morning with heavy snowpack 7x35 Binocs.
Distance / how measured? First spotted (50 meters) Final Observation (15 meters) across
Time(s) of observation: 9:23-9:24 AM. Total time of observation: 2 min
Weather (including larger weather patterns where relevant) / sky conditions / relative position of sun:
Very Cold (40°F), no wind, clear not a cloud in the sky Turned around and came in on the south of him with the sun to our back.
11. Previous experience with this and similar species: We see the frequently all year long, especially on the lakes up north in Canada and Minnesota.
12. Reasons for eliminating other similar species and/or hybrids: Eliminate Kestrel By size and colorings.
Eliminate Peregrine By size and Lack of dark head cap.

13. Were photos obtained? NO By whom? _____ Attached? _____

14. Books & illustrations consulted, and advice received. How did these influence this description?

NONE

15. How long after observation were field notes recorded? _____

16. How long after observation was this form completed? _____

17. Additional remarks: That was a pretty nice bird. I see them with regularity while out hunting. You just have to be patient. A Lot!
(especially Sept. - Early Dec)

Signed Brian A. Blumberg Date Jan 13, 1998