

For Record Comm File

James J. Dinsmore
Dept. of Animal Ecology
124 Sciences Hall II
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Ames, Iowa 50011

March 7th, 1983

Re: Gyrfalcon Specimen

Dear Mr. Dinsmore,

Thank you for taking the time to write. I am sorry I couldn't be reached by phone at the time of your calls. Perhaps, if there is ever a next time, I will not be so busy. Now, lets get down to business.

Your information concerning the Gyrfalcon, the date, and the source, are correct. At the time the bird came to me, I thought it had an unusual look to it for a Peregrine. But I took it to be a young female Peregrine as the occurrence of a Gyr in this area is so rare, it totally skipped my mind as a possibility. But now looking back on it, I do believe you are correct in your examination find. It is a truly amazing find, and I am proud to know that I would be part of it. Since I'm sure you would like to have all the information possible on this bird, I will go into further detail on the matter of how it came to me.

On November 25th, 1981, I received a call from a Mr. John Knowles of Akron, Iowa, who told me he had a Hawk of some kind and wanted to know how to care for it. He said it couldn't fly and wasn't eating the Turkey meat he was trying to feed it. I explained to him that the bird would have to be taken care of by a licensed rehabilitator, and that I was one, and that he should have the bird taken to Elk Creek Animal Hospital where we were caring for injured Raptors at the time. Later that day, The Veterinarian at the Hospital called me to tell me that he thought the bird was a Falcon. I rushed to the clinic, and when I looked in on the bird in his holding cage, I found him going through epileptic seizures, and died only 10 minutes later. Because Federal law prohibits us to perform autopsies on endangered species, we could only assume the bird died from mal-nutrition. I later talked to Mr. Knowles and he explained that he was a vegetarian, and when he found the bird, (3 days earlier), he had no meat in the house. But he eventually bought some Turkey meat, and placed some in the box with the bird and thought that it had eaten some, but not much.

After the bird died, I had approx. 2 weeks to examine it myself before Crouch came by for it. I too thought the bird may have been a Falconer's, but I found no jesse marks on his legs, neither did I find any bells attached, or telemetry equipment, which any Falconer with the pride of having a Peregrine, (especially a Gyr), would definitely use on such a bird. I find it very hard to believe that this bird was anything but wild, especially judging from his reported behavior in captivity with Mr. Knowles. He said the bird was too dangerous to attempt to hand feed, which a Falconry bird would readily do, that is eat out of the hand. He said that it would scream and roll over on it's back, talons ready, when he nearly peeked into the box.

As far as the tail is concerned, I noticed nothing wrong when I looked at it. But there may have been hunger traces, which are typical of young Raptors. But hunger traces usually occur in birds that are taken from the nest too early, and as I said, this bird seemed too vicious and free spirited to be taken from a nest. So what happened to the tail feathers should be investigated further.

The fantastic thing about all this is that if one such Gyrfalcon was found injured in Iowa, then perhaps there were others, and maybe there still are, flying free in this area. That would be a great sign for the Gyrs as it would show perhaps they are making a come back.

Now I would like to ask you something and that is, have you found the cause of the injury to this bird? Since it died before we had a chance to try and help, we never took exrays of the wings.

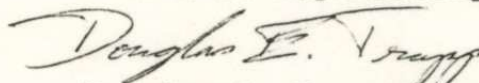
There is a Master Falconer in South Dakota that would be the only one that would possibly had a Gyr at that time. Just to be on the safe side, you might want to contact him. His name is Don Hunter. His phone number is [605] 563-2725. His address is RR # 2, Box 10, Centerville, S.D.

As far as my project is concerned, I have been forced to close down and am not accepting birds until I finish building our new facilities in a barn in Salix, Iowa. In 1982, I had so many birds come in that what little donations we received were not enough to care for the birds. We still accept donations of all sorts, but it seems the people in this area would rather shoot the poor things rather than help support their right to freedom. If you know of anyone who would like to help us with a donation, please have them send a check made out to, Midwest Raptor Rehabilitation Society, 3229 Lindenwood St., Sioux City, Iowa 51104. We also offer yearly memberships of... Students \$8.00, Single \$12.00, Family \$25.00, Supporting \$50.00, Sponcer \$100.00, and lifetime \$500.00. All donations are tax exempt. All members receive a periodic newsletter and Sponcers receive an appreciation plaque. Anyway, in order to get the project going again, we need a lot of support.

Well, I guess I said my nickles worth. And in the future when the project gets going again, I will designate that I wish all birds that die, be turned over to your department. As a federal Rehabilitator, it is entirely up to me where the study skins are sent. Ofcourse, if I have no preference, Crouch always suggests your department. And knowing that you were interested enough to look at the bird a bit closer than I did, really makes me feel good.

If you have any more questions, feel free to write or call.

Yours in Raptorology,



Douglas E. Trapp [President]
Midwest Raptor Rehabilitation
Society

P.S. Enclosed find a copy of the article on the bird that appeared in the Sioux City Journal on the 26th November, 1981.



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If You Find An Injured Bird,
CALL _____

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