

... Carol Ann Alexander  
1103 Wedgewood Circle  
Fairfield, IA 52556  
Jefferson County

Peregrine Falcon  
Documentation  
(Continued)  
18 Jan, 1991

... Describe the bird (Continued)

... of slow hovering-like flight. Don't know if it actually hovered. We both excitedly exclaimed at speed of dive. We had never seen a bird dive with such astounding speed except for Peregrine Falcons we had seen on television nature programs. "Dove so fast. Circled and disappeared into city block of trees, houses, and lawn." We thought it was hunting. We drove around block and saw, "two nervous pigeons nearby on Adams." (Richard has had extensive experience professionally and nonprofessionally with wild animals and wild birds. He noted the pigeons looked uneasy, although I didn't notice that detail.)

... Previous experience with species and similar ones  
(Continued)

... on birding trips throughout North America. I saw one Merlin perched on Marathon Key, Florida on Feb. 25, 1990. I reported the sighting on Feb. 27, 1990 to a naturalist ranger in Everglades National Park. He confirmed, having recently sighted a Merlin himself on the other side of the Gulf Coast. He said one could have easily flown to the Keys, where we saw it. (Richard had too brief of a glimpse to identify Merlin himself.) He also (ranger) said they are sighted in the Keys now and then ... Richard and I saw a Peregrine slide presentation by the Southeast Iowa Audubon Society and Mac Bird Raptor Center last fall. We have seen at least two television nature programs each that showed a Peregrine diving. I have studied the Peregrine identification in 5 field guides for a few years. I have pointed it out to Richard at least once during my studies.

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species Peregrine Falcon How many? 1  
 Location? Jefferson County - Fairfield, IA - Adams St; Jefferson St, + D St  
 Type of habitat? Residential area, 30° snow on ground.  
 When? date(s): 18 Jan; 1991 Time: 12:35 P.M (est.)  
 Who? your name and address Carol Ann Alexander; 1103 Wedgewood Circle; Fairfield, IA 52556  
 Others with you Richard M. Alexander; 1103 Wedgewood Circle, Fairfield, IA  
 Others before and after you None.

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also describe voice and behavior. (Field notes are in quotes.)

Richard and I discussed and agreed, "Approximately 16 inches long. About 6 inches longer than American Kestrel. Too big for Kestrel." Richard commented, "Stouter, beefier belly". We both agreed it wasn't any beefier or more massive in proportion to body than an American Kestrel's because both birds have such similar overall shapes. "Too big for merlin. Dove too fast. Small Peregrine head, swept back falcon wings, long narrow tail. Greyish white on underwings and lower belly." Unable to see any more color detail. "Dove at between a 35 to 40 degree angle (less than 45 degrees) after only a few seconds... (continued on other side)"

Similar species and how eliminated:

American Kestrel and Merlin. Both too small (about 6 inches smaller). Also no other bird could dive at that speed.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No.  
 If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Grey sky but excellent view of bird shape with naked eyes of 2 people. Closest viewing distance was within 100 feet (est.)  
 "We viewed minimum of 35 seconds." (Conservative time estimate.)

Previous experience with this species and similar ones:

Richard and I have seen dozens of American Kestrels while on camping and/or...

References and persons consulted before writing description: (Continued on other)

Hawks in Flight by Dunne, Sibley, and Sutton and Field Guide to Birds East

How long before field notes made? 10 min.

this form completed? March 1 and Feb 28.

(5 weeks.)

of the Rockies  
 by Roger Tory Peterson

Mail original form to field editor for this season.



3 weeks ago I found this unidentified picture in a nature catalogue. For the record, I gave myself and Richard independent chances to identify it at a glance. We both immediately said,

"Peregrine Falcon."