

Middlewestern Prairie Region
(Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio)

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Peregrine 2. Number: 1
3. Location Sand Point, on Coralville Reservoir N. of Iowa City IA.
4. Date: 26 Sept 1976 5. Time Bird seen: 3:30 PM to 4:15 PM
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and back and tail coloration, in addition, to the distinctive characteristics, but include only what actually pertains to the bird): large falcon - big rounded 'bullet' head, big chest, tapering body, rather long tail, long wings - when folded reach to end of tail. Upper parts dark from forehead to rump. wings + tail dark. face, throat, breast, belly white. chest + belly with fine transverse barring. dark of crown descends down rear of face in a 'sideburn' (see drawing made in field, att.). Bill rather small, dark. Legs yellow.
7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard to call.
8. Description of behavior: perched on dead snag - dropped from perch, flew to a flock of r-w blackbirds - vanished behind a rise in the ground, reappeared with a blackbird in its talons - flew to another tree, ate blackbird. after
9. Habitat - general: Reservoir & many dead trees
specific: emerging from water - bordered by wide weedy flats. surrounded by cropland to S, a wooded ridge to N. feeding, sat for a while, occasionally stretching wings + shaking itself. then flew off to the N.
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8; Explain:
Build rules out all raptors except falcons. Large size, prominent 'sideburn', transverse barring on lower parts rule out prairie falcon (not expected in IA), kestrel, merlin.
11. Distance (how measured)? 200-500 yd., estimated. 12. Optical equipment: 8x32 binoc. 25x60 scope 60x60 scope
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
v. dull grey drizzly day - no sun to speak of.
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: have seen perhaps 20 peregrines (Mass., Pa., Md., Wash.) and many merlins, kestrels; 1 each p. falcon (Wash) and gyrfalcon (Alaska).
15. Other observers: C. + B. Knight, C. Newlon
16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: —
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: None.
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? original notes, made in field, attached. Note drawing of head. This transcription made 5 days later.
Michael C. Newlon Address: 408 Wales St
- Signature
- Date: 30 Sept City, State: Iowa City IA. 52240

NB: earlier on the same day we saw a falcon at Cape Marsh, s. of Lowe Tree, IA (~40 m. S. (over) of the site described above) that we believed to be a peregrine. However the bird was far off and only briefly seen.

