

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Merlin How many? 1Location? Big Marsh - Butler Co.Type of habitat? MarshWhen? date(s): April 29, 1983 time: 8:15 AM to 8:20 AMWho? your name and address: Robert K. Myers 1236 Sylvia Ave. Waterloo, Iowaothers with you: —others before or after you: —

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

I was wading through marsh grass (less than knee high) flushing rails when this small dark falcon came from behind me and flew by to my right, crossed in front of me and landed on a dike about 75 yd. ahead. The bird had very steady wing beats (not fast) and flew just inches above the grass. I could only see top side. Bird was <sup>all</sup> slate gray with a wide dark band on end of tail and several other somewhat narrower black bands on up tail. When bird landed on ground (on dike) it was mostly obstructed by grass and I could only see shoulders + head. Head had bluish-gray cap and cheeks and sides of neck were ~~more~~ lighter (more buffy). Even with scope, I could see no trace of a mustache going down from eye as shown in many guides.  
Eye was dark.

Similar species and how eliminated: Kestrels tails do not have ~~on~~ the bold black bands, ~~on~~ and show reddish on tail + back. (NOT overall blue-gray)

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
Good lighting - sun from behind + to my right - Bird came by me at no more than 20' away - I used B+L 7x35's and also my 25x scope when bird landed.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen 3 others - one on 4-16-83References and persons consulted before writing description: NONEHow long before field notes made? 5 hrs this form completed? 1 day

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