

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Merlin How many? 1Location? George Wyth State Park - WaterlooType of habitat? Riverbottom Woods along the Cedar RiverWhen? date(s): Sept. 7, 1986 time: 11:15 a.m. to 11:18 a.m. approximatelyWho? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: John Cecil, Beth Proescholdt, Jackie Gardner, Phyllis Harris,others before or after you: none; Carol McMillen, Ramona Sommerlot, Bernie Knight, Mick Kubie

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 saw a hawk flapping its wings just above the trees and I thought it was a sharp-shinned hawk. But as it gained elevation and started to soar, I could tell it was a falcon with its long, pointed wings. We had good looks at the falcon which was brownish underneath and heavily streaked on its breast and body. It had a strongly barred tail. It soared overhead for some time and then was gone.

Similar species and how eliminated: sharp-shinned hawk has rounded wings. A Kestrel is smaller and a peregrine is considerably larger and neither have the strongly barred tail of a merlin.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

It was sunny and clear. We saw the merlin with the sunlight behind us, looking into the sun, and with the sun to our side, we viewed the merlin from approximately 50 yards to 100 yards away at various times. 8x30 Binocs

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen Merlins in Iowa and Churchill lately. Have seen a few Peregrines in Iowa lately and many Kestrels and sharp-shins.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Natl. Geog. Birds of N. America, Robbins' Birds of N. America, R.T. Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds.

How long before field notes made? 1/2 hour later this form completed? Sept. 17, 1986

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