

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Merlin (Falco columbarius) 2. Number 2

3. Location Sweet Marsh - Bremer County

4. Date: September 16, 1985 5. Time Bird Seen: 9: A.M. off and on all morning
to 11: A.M.

6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):

Small falcons with banded tails and very streaked breasts. First bird was brownish on back with narrow brownish striping on breast and a very noticeable facial stripe (sideburns). Second bird was more gray on the back and had broader stripes on the breast. Both had narrow dark tail with lighter bands and fairly long pointed wings. Breasts were light tan with darker streaks. Second bird did not have the obvious sideburns. Size was about same or possibly slightly larger than Kestrel.

Birds were not together. One was on south side of marsh and the second was on north side. We watched birds for a total of probably 30 to 45 minutes.

7. Description of voice, if heard: A chatter type call when chased by or chasing Bluejays.

8. Description of behavior: Flying low and very rapidly from one perch to another and chasing Bluejays and Flickers

9. Habitat - general: Marsh

specific: Wooded edge and perching on stickups in marsh

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:
Too small for Peregrine and wrong color pattern for Kestrel.

11. Distance (how measured)?

closest = 25 ft.

12. Optical equipment:

10X binocs and 25X scope

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):

Bright clear day and birds were seen several times over a fairly long time span so we had some real good looks.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:

I am very familiar with Kestrels and have seen quite a few Merlins and a few Pregrines.

15. Other observers: Francis Moore

16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Francis Moore

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

None needed

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 2 days

Signature: Robert K. Myers Address: R.R. 2, Box 153

Date: Sept. 18, 1985 City, State: Perry, Iowa 50220