

Peregrine Falcon -- Documentation

In the morning of Wednesday, October 24, 1990, I observed an adult Peregrine Falcon in Western Sioux County (about 11 miles straight west of Sioux Center). I was on my way home from the Big Sioux River, and so was heading east. The Falcon flew across the road from north to south in front of my car. In flight I noticed its large size, pointed wings, slaty upper parts, and dark head markings.

The bird veered to the west and landed in back of me on some telephone wires, where it precariously maintained its balance. I slowly backed the car up until I could get a clear view of the bird (perhaps 75 yards away). Through my 9x25 Nikon binocs I could clearly see its black crown and nape, producing the characteristic "helmet and sideburns effect," along with the slaty back and lightly barred underparts. The bird remained on the wires for about 5 minutes or so, then took off towards the south.

I am familiar with all the North American falcons. The regular falcons in this area are Kestrel, Merlin, and Prairie Falcon (last winter was a banner year for the Prairie Falcon). This bird was most definitely not a Prairie Falcon. Its slaty upper parts and very dark head markings completely rule out such a possible confusion. I have seen Peregrines in Ontario (Canada), South Dakota, Minnesota, Alberta, B.C., and California. I saw a Gyrfalcon in Manitoba some years ago.

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