

DOCUMENTATION FORM
Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Prairie Falcon

Location: 4 miles e. Reinbeck, Black Hawk County, IA

Habitat: Farmstead with silos, open fields

Date(s): 3/1/89

Time: 5:56 pm to 6:28 pm

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Ave., Norwalk, Iowa 50211

Other observers: Beth Brown, Mark Proescholdt, Beth Proescholdt, Chuck Fuller,
Cal Knight, Bernie Knight

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 behavior and voice.

We first saw the bird as it was sitting on the silo near its roost hole. It had the appearance of a large falcon with a streaked breast. The wings and back were a light, sandy brown. The bird had a short, narrow superciliary white line, narrow black mustache mark, black eye, lighter colored lower mandible on the bill and somewhat of a hood but not as distinct as a peregrine's. As the bird flew behind the silos, the long pointed wings confirmed it was a falcon. It disappeared for several minutes and then reappeared, flying around the field to the east. The black axillars were very much in evidence at this time. After swooping over the field for awhile, it landed on a fence post where it sat until the light no longer allowed me to observe it through binoculars. It flew back to the silo at 6:27 p.m. and disappeared into the roost hole about one minute later.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Other hawks were eliminated by the long, pointed wings and general body shape. Size eliminated all falcons but the peregrine, but the presence of the black axillars confirmed that this was indeed a prairie falcon.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

The day was overcast and in fact snow began falling just as we left the area. This coupled with the time of day made late observation difficult but not impossible. The bird was observed anywhere from 100' to 200 yards through 7x26 binoculars and a scope at 30x-45x.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Several seen in western US.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

None

How long before field notes made? 4 hours How long before this form completed? 1 month