

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Merlin How many? 1Location? 3/4 mile N of Luther Bridge along Des Moines River, Boone Co.Type of habitat? migrating down large river valleyWhen? date(s): Sept. 23, 1984 time: 2:35 P.M. to 2:37 PMWho? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames IA 50010others with you: Gary Downs, Ames

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.

Bird was seen in direct comparison with a Peregrine Falcon and a Coopers Hawk. Bird definitely smaller, estimated 12" long. Wings pointed like a falcon's, not broad like accipiter's sp. The bird had a rather long tail which was definitely seen to be barred with black and white as it flew directly overhead about 50-75' in the air. The underparts were heavily streaked and generally appeared dark in color. The underwings were also rather dark in color. The tail was rather long and narrow, much like an accipiter sp. and unlike a buteo.

As the bird flew down the valley, it made two attempts to catch swallows, each time failing to do so. The bird flew quite swiftly and dove 20-30' out of its path on each attempt to catch a swallow.

Similar species and how eliminated: Am. kestrel eliminated by rusty color on back and tail, ~~lack of strong barring on~~ ~~tail~~ and overall lighter colored appearance. Other falcons eliminated by larger size and lack of strongly barred tail. Accipiter's sp. eliminated by lack of pointed wings, lack of strongly barred tail, and, except for Sharp-shinned hawk, larger size.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: lighting was good overall, even though the day was partly overcast. Viewing distance was 50-75', estimated. I used 7x35 Bausch and Lomb binoculars.Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen three others in Iowa.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

National Geographic Society Field Guide to Birds of North AmericaHow long before field notes made? 24 hours this form completed? 24 hours

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