

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Merlin How many? 1Location? Grammer Grove Wildlife Area, Marshall CountyType of habitat? Floodplain woodland, open pasture area, upland forestWhen? date(s): Sept. 22, 1984 time: 11:30 to 11:35 a.m.Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Beth Proescholdtothers before or after you: none

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.

We had been seeing many hawks flying on this cloudy, windy day and eventually saw 43 Sharp-shinned Hawks in our 3½ hours of watching. We saw a sharp-shin coming by just over the treetops being chased by a falcon of about the same size. They were flying back and forth through the tree-tops about 120-150 yds. away. Then the falcon flew to a dead tree about 80 yards away and sat perched for about 3 minutes. (The falcon ^{had} pointed wings as it flew.) The falcon was dark brown with a very streaked breast and front. It had dark stripes on the side of its face. (Mom saw its heavily barred tail.) Then the falcon flew right at us with powerful falcon wingbeats and flew right over our heads about 20 feet above us. I saw its facial pattern very well as it flew toward us.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Sharpshinned Hawks do not have pointed wings but accipiter-shaped wings. They lack dark stripes on the side of the face. Bird was too small for a peregrine.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

Cloudy with the light behind us. Distances estimated. 7X35 Binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Saw a Merlin at IOU Convention in September at Muscatine. Saw many sharpshins that day.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Birding field guides - Nat'l. Geog., R.T. Peterson's, and Robbins.

How long before field notes made? immediately this form completed? Oct. 7, 1984
afterwards

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