

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Merlin (Falco columbarius) How many? 1 ad. ♂Location? 1 mile East of south entrance to Sweet Marsh, Bremer Co., IAType of habitat? Open plowed farmland next to gravel road.When? date(s): April 7, 1984 time: 8:10 am to 8:14 amWho? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703others with you: Russell Haysothers 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.

The bird was sitting on top of a fence post when noticed <sup>it</sup> alongside the road to the South entrance to Sweet Marsh. It was an adult bird with a dark blue-black back, a brown ~~back~~ streaked head. Its breast and belly was light brown color streaked with darker brown. The birds tail ~~had~~ had light (2 or 3) bands on it with darker almost black bands wider than the lighter bands. When the bird flew it had powerful falconlike flight with shallow ~~strokes~~ strokes but never gliding as long as it was in view (1/4 mile) like an accipiter would. The wings were long and narrow with a befinated pointed look not rounded. No voice was heard.

Similar species and how eliminated: Peregrine Falcon does not have as large bands on the tail as this bird had. Peregrine also has strong facial mustache marking and is much larger. Accipiters do not have as strong direct and continuous flapping flight as this bird had.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
Bright and sunny. Seen at closest distance approx. 50 feet using 7x35 mm binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen several Merlin and Peregrine Falcons before. Have seen all species of Accipiter also.

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? 1 hour this form completed? 10 hours

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240