

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Merlin, ♀ or imm How many? 1Location? Babcock Lk Rd, Hawkeys WA, Johnson Co IAType of habitat? dead trees at edge of reservoir.When? date(s): 10 Oct time: 10:00 to 10:30 AMWho? your name and address: M Newton

others with you: \_\_\_\_\_

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.

size of bluejay but falcon build: big head, big chest, long wings, long square tail. upper parts brownish - even faintly streaked/mottled with dark brown, nearly black. Back feathers irregularly mottled with pale ~~tan~~ tan. primaries v. dark, nearly black. Tails mottled brown.

face pale, flecked with darker; auriculars darker so face with a pale border - narrow over eye, wider below and at rear edge. faint dark line descending from point between eye + bill.

throat: whitish. Underparts to legs heavily marked with brown, more rufous than on upper parts: on breast, fine streaks; on belly, broad bars and shaft-streaks.

eye dark, bill grey, short + stubby; cere greyish; legs orange-yellow; feet large. bill strongly hooked.

tail: upper surface: black with 2 narrow white bars + narrow white tip. Under surface: dark, with 2 wider pale bars, close to base + close together, then a wider dark bar, and a broken narrow pale bar close to tip. (In flight 2 narrow pale bars visible on basal upper surface.)  
in flight; slightly larger than kestrel, heavier body, broader base to wings, wingbeats deep + noisy.

Similar species and how eliminated:

small size, facial pattern, coloration eliminate kestrel.  
(diagnostic photo taken)

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? —

If yes, explain:

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

30' - 100' est.

dull grey day; no sun.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: have seen many merlins (MA, WA) and kestrelsReferences and persons consulted before writing description: —How long before field notes made? on spot this form completed? 12-06

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