

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Merlin 2. Number 1
3. Location Marshall Cty, Bangor twp, open woodlands by Honey Creek
4. Date: October 8, 21 1982 5. Time Bird Seen: 5:30 pm to 5:40 pm
^{1st sighting}
^{2nd sighting 10:00 AM}
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):
It had been standing still for 10 minutes - when a blue-jay sized bird flew thru the woods low and landed on a branch (no leaves) about 3 ft. high and 15' away. Back was blue-grey, front light tan & ~~sp~~ streaked with dark brown - white throat (male merlin). He looked at me full on - I could see the 2 toned beak - yellow tan with dark hook - facial pattern - light over eye - darker blackish streak down from the eye. Didn't see tail at this time very well. After 10 minutes - he flew low thru the trees - noted the pointed wings & long tail banded.
7. Description of voice, if heard:
8. Description of behavior: sat still on branch ten minutes -
9. Habitat - general: flew low thru trees.
specific: woodlands - leaves falling
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:
Size - Blue Jay with ^{low} Binoc - my first guess - Not Am. Kestrel - coloring wrong -
wings pointed - not sharp-shinned -
11. Distance (how measured)? by estimating distance
12. Optical equipment: 7X35 mm. Custom Bushnells
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
partly cloudy - Sunny - good light on bird
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
15. Other observers: None
16. Did the others agree with your identification?
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
Peterson field guide
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Audubon Encyclopedia of N. Am. Birds - confirmed my identifications
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? wrote on my notebook at the time.
- Signature: Ramona R. Sommerlot Address: Union
- Date: Nov 30 City, State: Iowa 50258