

## DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Merlin How many? 1Location? Between Big Creek State Park and Saylorville ReservoirType of habitat? Over wooded hillsides along the Des Moines RiverWhen? date(s): April 20, 1987 time: 10:10 a.m. to 10:11 a.m. (or less)Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscumb, 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.

Mom spotted a hawk some distance away coming toward us. It was a definite falcon with falcon-shaped wings and not a Sharpshinned hawk. It came right overhead probably 100 yards or more above us. It was a dark color but we didn't see any color contrasts. We had good looks at its outline. It was a falcon about the size of a large sharp-shinned hawk. It was much larger than a Kestrel and smaller than a Peregrine. It was gliding on strong south winds and heading north up the river valley. We watched it for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a minute.

Similar species and how eliminated: A sharp-shinned hawk has rounded wings and not pointed like a falcon. A Peregrine is considerably larger and a Kestrel is much smaller.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:  
mostly sunny with sun to our sides and behind us; distance estimated;  
8X30 Binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen a number of Merlins, an increasing number of Peregrines, many sharpshins

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Peterson's Birds E. of Rockies, Robbins' Birds of N. America, Natl. Geog. Birds of N. America

How long before field notes made? Right Away this form completed? April 22, 1987

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