

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Prairie Falcon How many? 1Location? Hardin County - NW of Hubbard and South of AldenType of habitat? almost all fields of corn and beans - mostly plowed nowWhen? date(s): Nov. 28, 1989 time: 1:30 p.m. to 1:31 p.m.Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Box 65, Liscomb, Ia. 50148others with you: noneothers 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.

As I turned a corner, ~~I~~ looked at this hawk in a tree and thought it must be a Redtailed Hawk. But as I went on, I thought the posture was wrong for a Redtail and it didn't quite look like a Redtail. I turned around and slowed down as I approached. This large raptor had a light brown color and a tawny creamy-white breast. This bird had finely-streaked brown vertical streaks on its breast, and I knew I didn't have a Redtail. It had a wide tail look when it was perched. It had a slight "mustache" mark on its facial pattern. It watched me for a while and then spread its wings and took off. As it spread its wings, I saw striking large dark axillaries and wing coverts on its underwings. Then as it flew, I saw that lovely, large falcon shape. It had a dark brown coloring on its topside. It flew 200-300 yards and landed on top of an old barn. That was exciting!

Similar species and how eliminated:

A Peregrine has different facial markings and lacks the distinctive dark axillaries and wing coverts.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Partly sunny day with sun behind me. The falcon was in a tree 25'-30' high and 40' away from my van. (distances estimated). 8X30 Binocs.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

Have seen a number of Prairie Falcons and quite a few Peregrines.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Natl. Geographic guide, Robbins' Birds of N. America, R.T. Peterson's Birds of N. America guide

How long before field notes made? Made at once this form completed? NOV. 28, 1989

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