

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF  
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Paragone Falcon 2. Number 1
3. Location Muskrat Slough, Jones Co, Iowa
4. Date: 30 April 1981 5. Time Bird Seen: ~ 7:45 to 8:05
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):  
 Large falcon flew across marsh and landed in tall tree in marsh. We walked through the marsh for 15 min trying to get close to it. Breast and belly appeared very light gray. Head appeared darker with probable face mask - but too far to be clear. When I was at closest point the bird flew. Size about same as ring-billed gull nearby. Long pointed wings with deep fast strong wing beat. In flight appeared dark on wings and back. Flight direct.
7. Description of voice, if heard: N/A
8. Description of behavior: Direct flight in and out of tall tree. Erect posture when sitting.
9. Habitat - general: large marsh  
 specific: Tree on island on SW west side of Muskrat Slough
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:  
Too large for a merlin. Prairie Falcon very unlikely at this location and time of year. Also bird too dark. Axillaries not specifically seen.
11. Distance (how measured)? 200 yards (guess)
12. Optical equipment: 8x40 Telescopes
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
Light overcast. Bird seen against light sky
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
Saw 2 in Iowa last fall, also in Texas.
15. Other observers:  
Tom Starnet
16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: none
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
none
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 4 hours
- Signature: Thomas H Kent Address: 211 Richards St
- Date: 30 Apr 1981 City, State: Iowa City IA 52240