

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Prairie Falcon How many? 1

Location? 2 mi E of Irvington, Kossuth Co. Ia

Type of Habitat? open harvested fields

When? date(s): Oct. 23, 1988 time: 6:00 PM to 6:30 PM

Who? your name and address: Matthew Kenne 709 N. Phillips, Algona Ia 50511

Others with you: none (wife)

Others 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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Driving N, I saw a Rough-legged H. ^{Female} N. Harrier, and a smaller brown bird in a "dog fight" approx 200 yds to my ~~NE~~ NE. The harrier broke off as I stopped, and the brown bird forced the R-legged to ground. It then landed on a fencepost between 2 fields.

The bird was light brown on the back and creamy below. It was crow-sized, with pointed wings and a straight narrow tail. It didn't soar, hover, or glide, but flew on fast, strong, powerful wingbeats. The bird ~~was~~ had dark axillaries, and dark under the wings.

I walked about 40 yds down the fence row. ~~Both~~ Both birds flew into the field, disappearing beyond a rise. I returned about 10 minutes later with a spotting scope, and the bird was back on the fencepost.

I could see a narrow mustache between the eye and the hooked bill. It had yellow feet. I could see brown spots or ~~streaks~~ streaks on the breast. I could hear no sound.

I walked to within 70 yds, ~~then~~ then the bird flew off into the dusk, heading south, flying low.

Similar species; how eliminated:

Bird did not have dark color of Peregrine's back, dark cap, or heavy "sideburns". Did not have the heavy barring on the underside of the tail like the Merlin. Dark axillaries and dark bar on underwing are features of no other raptor, falcon or otherwise.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? NA
If yes, explain:

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

Clear sky, but sun going down behind me. Distances estimated, except final 100 yds paced off. 7x50 binoculars 20x spotting scope from car. Ram windy + cold.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I have seen a few Merlins + 1 Peregrine, but Prairie Falcon is a life bird for me.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

none

How long before field notes made? none this form completed? 2 hrs.

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).