

**DOCUMENTATION FORM**  
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Prairie Falcon How many? 1

Location? SW Palo Alto Co, Section 27 Booth township, IA

Type of Habitat? Flat glaciated open farmland with mixed grass + stubble

When? date(s): 7 Feb 1988 time: 10<sup>00</sup> to 10<sup>05</sup> Approx

Who? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St, Iowa City, IA 52240

Others with you: Ron Harms

Others before or after you: Harms, Judy Carlson, Knight, Jim Fuller, etc

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.

We had been looking for the bird all morning and were about to give up, when Ron suggested we try a road we had not been on. We spotted a bird flying over the fields into a strong NW wind and noted that its flight appeared different than the crows and Rock Doves we had been seeing. We watch it as it hunted over the field for about 5 minutes when it disappeared about 1 mile away. We drove to the location but could not find it again. It was a large falcon (long pointed wings, long tail, strong continuous flight). It appears light gray-brown - darker above. I was able to see dark along the axillary area as it flew away and several times note dark inner under wings as it flew. At times it appeared to hover as it faced the strong wind. The distance was too great to see facial or other detail. The bird was definitely larger,

Similar species; how eliminated: heavier and stronger than a kestrel with more direct flight.

The size and flight eliminate kestrel. The dark axillaries eliminate Gyrfalcon and Peregrine falcon. The long shape eliminates other raptors.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? no  
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.  
Sun behind and to east of us. Bird 1/2 to 1 mile by section roads.  
10x binoculars and 20x scope used.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Studied several in Colorado last summer + have seen several others.

References and persons consulted before writing description: none

How long before field notes made? none this form completed? 6 1/2 hours

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