

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Merlin How many? 1Location? Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.Type of habitat? flying through trees right along edge of waterWhen? date(s): Sept. 20, 1984 time: 5:15 PM to _____Who? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames IA 50010others with you: Eric Munson, Amesothers before or after you: _____

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.

Bird was small, estimated ~~10~~^{12"} inches long. The narrow pointed wings were prominent as well as the rather long, narrow tail. The back, back of neck, back of wings and back of tail were all ~~dark~~ uniformly dark in color. The underside ~~of~~ of the tail was clearly barred black and white in color with a somewhat broader white bar being on the tip of the tail. The underparts, including the breast and ~~the~~ belly were noted as being streaked with a brown or tan color.

while flying the bird called twice, each time uttering a series of rapid high pitched notes, not quite a trill.

Similar species and how eliminated: Am. Kestrel was eliminated because of the lack of a rusty back, rusty tail and the unbarred undertail. Peregrine and Prairie Falcons eliminated by larger size and lack of strongly barred tail. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks eliminated by the longer tails, lack of strong barring underneath tail, and by the broader, non-pointed wings.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NoIf yes, explain: _____

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

Lighting was excellent as it was a clear day. Bird was seen flying at a distance of 20-25', estimated. Used Barch + Lomb 7x35 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen several Merlins, in Iowa and elsewhere. Have also seen accipiter's sp. and other falcons on numerous occasions.References and persons consulted before writing description: Golden Guide, Robbins et. al. Birds of N. America National Geographic Society Field Guide to Birds of N. AmericaHow long before field notes made? immediately this form completed? 3 1/2 hours

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