

D O C U M E N T A T I O N

Merlin (second Merlin in September, 1994) --

On Wednesday, September 21, I was birding the Rock Valley Wildlife Area just northwest of the town. This is an area with shrubs, scattered trees (including snags), and ponds. A small raptor flew out of one tree and into another, alighting neatly on a bare branch. I had seen Sharp-shinned Hawks in this area a week before, but the pointed wings made me recognize at once I was looking at a falcon. The bird allowed itself to be observed in good light, and was easily identifiable as a female (or immature) Merlin: vertically striped breast, no Kestrel-like head markings, brownish upperparts (no rusty), and barred tail. The bird flew back and forth between several trees, and so allowed an especially fine observation. I spend about 20 minutes looking at this bird.

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