

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Prairie Falcon How many? 1Location? Black Hawk County - 4 1/2 miles east of Reinbeck on #175Type of habitat? open farmland, unused silos beside busy roadWhen? date(s): February 26, 1989 time: 5:10 PM to 5:45 PMWho? your name and address: Beth Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Mark Proescholdt, Eugene & Eloise Armstrong, Denny &others before or after you: Cecile Thompson, Reid & Pam Allen
Francis Madre

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.

After a long wait across the road from the silos, Armstrongs & Allens saw a flurry of pigeons above a farmstead, and the Prairie Falcon was flying fast & low above a tawny field, with a strong rowing wing beat. It was a large falcon, Peregrine-size, but light brown. It flashed behind the silos, & landed on the east side of a corncrib, about 150 yards away, out of the wind, staying there from 5:10 - 5:37. With a scope we could see its narrow mustache stripe & dark streakings on its buffy breast. As Armstrongs & Allens started to drive away, the falcon flew ^{from the corncrib and} behind the silos & seemingly landed on top. We drove up the road slowly, hoping for another look & there was one more swift, short flight out & back, in front of us and close (about 40 yards) as it scooped up to the side of a silo, allowing us a great look of its black axillars & underwing coverts, & into the silo - and gone, at 5:45 P.M. Exciting!!

Similar species and how eliminated: Peregrine - the bird we saw was very light brown, had a thin mustache stripe & not a Peregrine's wider sideburn, & it had dark axillars as well as underwing coverts.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

clear sky, sun behind us - 150 yards to corncrib, 40 yards as bird flew across in front of us & up to silo - 8x30 Nikon binoculars, 22x scope

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I have seen a few Prairie Falcons & several Peregrines.

References and persons consulted before writing description: noneHow long before field notes made? at once this form completed? Feb. 27, 1989MAIL TO: F. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240