

DOCUMENTATION FORM

For extraordinary bird sightings in X\_IA, \_\_NE or \_\_SD

Species: Prairie Falcon

Number seen: 1

Location: St. Joseph's Hospital (abandoned), Sioux City, Woodbury, IA

Habitat: tall brick buildings with broken windows providing roosting sites for hundreds of Rock Doves. Numerous perches and open space for flight.

Date: 12/18/97

Time: 1645-1650

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Others with me: none

Others before/after me: Jerry Probst, Bob Moritz

Description: A brown hawk perched on a building ledge (35 ft.), facing the wall. Large, but smaller and slighter than a Red-tailed Hawk; much larger than the Kestrel present. Brown crown, nape, back, wings and tail. A lighter face showing distinct dark tear marks below the eye, one anterior, and one posterior, to the eye. A whitish superciliary. The wing tips were about one inch shorter than the tail.

Similar species & differentiation: The distinct tear marks eliminated all hawks but falcons and also eliminated the Merlin. Long wings, relative to the tail, and body size eliminated Gyrfalcon. Size and direct comparison eliminated Kestrel. Lack of dark "helmet" eliminated Peregrine Falcon.

Disagreeing identifications: none

Conditions - light, distance & optics: Minolta 10X50 binocs, Celestron 32X60 scope; low angle frontal lighting; at 100 meters.

Previous experience with species: Seen on several occasions in IA, NE  
Seen all falcons mentioned except Gyrfalcon.

References: Nat'l Geo. F. G.

Notes taken, with bird in view. Identification with bird in view.

Documented: 1/2/98

*Bill Huser*