

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Merlin 2. Number: 1
3. Location Iowa, Madison County, Jefferson 11
4. Date: Mar 15 - 1983 5. Time Bird seen: 2:30 to 2:32
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):
- 12-14 inches length, falcon shape, sitting with back toward us, steel blue down total back, with black barring on tail (top) cap on top of head, dark color, lacking any pattern such as kestrel or peregrine
7. Description of voice, if heard: none
8. Description of behavior: perched in tree top, but moved on apparently in migration
9. Habitat - general: grass, cropland, waste land, tree covered creek
specific: tree top, cottonwood along small ditch
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
Kestrel, this bird larger, no face pattern, no red on any part of back not large enough for peregrine
11. Distance (how measured)? 30 rod estimate 12. Optical equipment: 7:35 binoculars + 20 power scope
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
sky was light overcast, bird directly north so light was on bird, away from observer
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
growth time we had have seen this species with other observers
15. Other observers: E. Lane Armstrong
16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: none
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Golden Book checked, not really needed as we have seen other merlins
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 5-6 days
- Eugene Armstrong Address: Booneville Iowa 50038
Signature
- Date: March 20 - 1983 City, State: Iowa