

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What Species? Peregrine Falcon

How many? 1

Location? Allamakee Co. (I think)

Type of Habitat? Bluff overlooking wooded river valley.

When? date(s)? Nov. 22, 1986

time: 12:30

to

Who? your name and address: Robert Cecil, 327 S. 6th, Keokuk, Iowa 52632

others with you: Tom Kent, Francis Moore.

others before or after you: No

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

I was watching a Golden Eagle when someone noted another, smaller raptor above it. The bird, due to its long, pointed wings and distinct shape, was quickly identified as a falcon. The first coloration I noted was the beige or sandy underparts. Probably because we had been discussing Prairie Falcon on the way up, and disregarding the location and habitat, I started looking to see if the bird had dark axillaries which would suggest Prairie. About the time I established there were no dark axillaries, the bird vanished behind a bluff and was not seen again. I realized the features I had observed were not particularly diagnostic for Peregrine, and therefore, this documentation should probably be considered in conjunction with those submitted by Kent and Moore.

I did note the size in relation to the Golden Eagle. This bird was much smaller: perhaps 1/3 the total bulk, perhaps 1/2 the wingspan of the accompanying Golden Eagle. I feel a Kestrel or Merlin would have been much more dwarfed by the Eagle.

Similar species and how eliminated: Prairie: No dark axillaries. Merlin: Size.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Don't remember weather conditions. Binocs: 10x40

Previous experience with this and similar species:

Limited experience with all regular N. American Falcons except Gyrfalcon.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Tom Kent, Francis Moore, N.G.S. Field Guide to Birds of N.A.

How long before field notes made?

not made

How long before this form completed?

Begun after 24 hours. Completed in 5 days.