

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

Peregrine Falcon --

On Thursday evening, September 16, I saw a relatively large bird of prey zip over my yard, pursued by squealing blackbirds and starlings. I only caught a glimpse, and at first thought that because of the bird's size and general demeanor I might have seen a Cooper's Hawk. About five minutes later, however, I saw the bird again, this time flying directly to our east (the sun was in the west), so that I had an opportunity to see the bird clearly. The bird was larger than a crow, had typical falcon-like pointed wings, and displayed the characteristic head markings (dark cap, moustache) of the Peregrine. The bird flew from the south-east to the north-west. I saw it very clearly, and determined it to be a male (blue-gray upper parts, sharply marked head).

Peregrines are rare in our part of the state (this is only the second time I see a Peregrine in Sioux Co.). Its clear head markings definitely rule out a Prairie Falcon (which is now becoming a regular visitor here in winter), and the bird was much too large to be a smaller falcon (e.g., Merlin).

I am quite familiar with Peregrines, having seen them in Ontario (Canada), Alberta, British Columbia, California, South Dakota, as well as in Germany, and, as mentioned, once before in Sioux Co.)

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