

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Peregrine Falcon How many? 1Location? Saylorville - Polk Co. - below damType of habitat? tall cottonwood in river bottom timber by 2 pondsWhen? date(s): October 1, 1986 time: 1:30 to 2:45 P.M.Who? your name and address: Beth Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Mark Proescholdt

others before or after you: _____

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.

As we drove along the "fishermen's road" near the ponds below the dam we saw the silhouette of a hawk perched about 50 feet high in a Cottonwood. We found it to be Peregrine with its back to us, very alert & constantly turning its head to show the dark mustache contrasting with the off-white earcoverts. Its back was a charcoal blue-gray with brownish in its wings. After watching 20 minutes @ about 80 yards, we drove up past the tree & turned around facing the bird, since it showed no alarm when 2 or 3 other cars drove past. There at 30-40 yards we viewed it head-on for 15 minutes before moving to within 20-25 yards for 40 minutes. There we could see its off-white underparts - an off-white throat & its foreneck almost a white "ruff." Crosswise dark barring showed on sides, flanks, thighs, & vent area, while dark spotting was on breast & belly, & tail was barred. Three times it stretched its wings showing fine barring on its underwings. Talons & legs were yellow & we could see no band. It had a sharply hooked beak with a dark tip, & a light eye-ring that was oval-shaped. At various times it preened, scratched, cleaned its talon with its beak, stretched both wings & legs, & craned its neck at a group of birds flying over, & at an airplane. Finally, after our watching it for an hour & 15 minutes, it flew over our heads at 20 feet & with rapid wingbeats was gone.

Similar species and how eliminated:

This was so definitely a Peregrine there was no similar species.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

overcast - 20 minutes @ 80 yards, 15 minutes @ 30-40 yards, 40 minutes at 20-25 yards - 8x30 Nikon binoculars & 22x Bushnell Spacemaster scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen 5 Peregrines in 2 weeksReferences and persons consulted before writing description: National Geog., Peterson, Peter Dunne's Hawk Watch, Audubon's Master Guide,How long before field notes made? at once this form completed? October 11, 1986

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