

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

What species? Prairie Falcon How many? 1

Location? 1/2 mile S. of Highway 17 bridge at Sailorville Res., Polk Co.

Type of Habitat? Ag. land interspersed with woodlots.

When? date(s): Nov. 10, 1991 time: 9:45 to 9:50 AM

Who? your name and address: Bob Cecil 1315 41st St. Des Moines, IA 50311

Others with you: Sue Spieker

Others before or after you: See below.

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.

Observed an approximately crow-sized raptor sitting in the top of a leafless tree. From 1st impression of size and shape, assumed it was a hacked Peregrine. Noted breast was heavily streaked with light brown, and back of the same color - a sandy brown. As I observed the bird, it dawned on me that this bird was very pale compared to the hacked Peregrines I had watched from the Ruan bldg. this summer. I then noted the pale brown mustache mark dropping from the eye. As it was uniform in width from the eye to the end, and there was no suggestion of a helmet, I concluded I had a Prairie. The mustache was surrounded by white, and the throat was white. As the bird was sitting, we dug out the NGS Guide to look for additional field marks. It noted the streaked crown, which we were able to see

After observing the bird at rest and making notes, we decided to get out of the car for a closer view. The bird then flew, revealing the black axillaries.

I understand that a Prairie had been reported in this same approximate area twice in recent weeks.

I know a good documenter doesn't do this, but it looked just like the photo in the Audubon Master Guide.

Similar species; how eliminated: Narrow, uniform width mustache, streaked crown, and dark axillaries eliminate Peregrine. Size eliminates Merlin.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No.
If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), optical equipment.
Distance about 100'. Optics included 10x40 binocs, and 20x scope.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen all U.S. falcons except Gyr and Aplomado. Had never seen Prairie at rest before.

References and persons consulted before writing description: NGS, Audubon Master Guide.

How long before field notes made? At time this form completed? 48 hrs

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).