

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Merlin 2. Number 1
3. Location Co. Rd. W48, Johnston Co., Iowa
4. Date: 3/18/79 5. Time Bird Seen: 2:00 PM to (15 sec.)

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):

Medium-sized falcon, pointed wings, chunky body, flew NNE some 200 ft. over the ground with powerful strokes interrupted by occasional brief glides. Looked all dark in the prevailing light

7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard

8. Description of behavior: direct, powerful flight

9. Habitat - general: over flooded fields

specific: tailwaters of Conville Reservoir

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:

Kestrel - slimmer, flight less direct and powerful; Sharp-shin: rounded wings, relatively longer tail, more flapping flight

11. Distance (how measured)?

est. 500 ft. when closest

12. Optical equipment:

7x35 Leica Trinoid

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):

light overcast, considerable glare

OSun

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: obs.

I have seen at least ten Merlins, including one last year on 3/20 in roughly the same location, and many

15. Other observers: —

Am. Kestrels

16. Did the others agree with your identification? —

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: —

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Robins, Peterson etc, confirmatory, no influence on description

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 75 min.

Signature: A. H. Allen

Address: R#6

Date: 3/18/79

City, State: IOWA CITY, IA 52240