

Merlin -- Documentation

On September 17 I discovered a Merlin sitting on a fence post along the south side of county road B-40 about 4 miles west of Sioux Center (Sioux Co). The bird was either a female or a juvenile: brownish above, and striped (lengthwise) breast. The bird was devouring a (Vesper?) sparrow. As I approached, it flew to the next post, thereby exhibiting its pointed wings and banded tail. There was no possible confusion with a Kestrel: the bird possessed no distinctive Kestrel head markings and no rufous on back and tail. The light was excellent (sun behind me) and the bird allowed me to approach (in my car) to within 12 yards.

I am fairly familiar with the Merlin. I generally observe two or three Merlins per year in our area (hence I wonder whether continued documentation for this area is justified). I have also seen Merlins in California and in Alberta.

Documentation written on September 17, 1988.

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