

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Merlin (Falco columbarius) How many? 2 female

Location? One South side of Sweet Marsh and One North side of Sweet Marsh, Bremer Co., IA

Type of habitat? Near open marsh sitting in tp of dead tree.

When? date(s): September 15,16, 1985 time: 9:00 am to 11:30 am

Who? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703

others with you: Robert Myers, Perry

others before or after you: None that I know of

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.

The first bird was seen on the 15th out in the open marsh from a long distance when I was alone. I came back the next day with Bob and found (probably) the same bird a short distance away at the South entrance of the Marsh being harassed by N. Flickers and Blue Jays in a large Oak tree. This bird was dark brown on the top of the head, back of the neck, back, wings and top of the tail. The tail was barred with dark brown and light brown. The side of the head was a lighter tannish color with some streaking in it. The throat, breast and lower parts were a buffy brownish color with darker verticle streaking over the whole area. There was a thin mustache mark below the front of the eye into the cheek. The second bird was seen on the North side of the Marsh at the dam. It was sitting in the top of a small deciduous tree. This bird was also a dark brown color but was a different bird than the one seen earlier. This bird had a heavier, darker mustache mark and the streaking on the throat, breast and belly areas was heavier and bolder than the first bird. Otherwise it looked the same. Both birds had a very fast falcon-like flight and could fly at a very fast rate of speed.

Similar species and how eliminated: The Am. Kestrel and Peregrine are differently colored. This was a falcon and not one of the other two species of falcons.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Sunny, seen from approx. 25 to 30 feet at closest using Leitz 10X30 binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have seen several Peregrin Falcons, quite a few Merlins and lots of Am. Kestrels

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? 10 min each this form completed? 7 hrs.

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