

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Prairie Falcon

How Many?1

Location?Saylorville Reservoir, Polk Co.-along river channel north of Jester Park

Habitat?flying back and forth along river channel

Date?14 Oct 1988

Time?9:25-9:36 a.m.

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames, IA 50010

Others who saw bird:Bery Engebretsen

Description of bird:We were scanning over numerous gulls and shorebirds when Bery commented that he thought he was looking at a large falcon. The bird was flying back and forth along the old river channel north of Jester Park, and it was being mobbed by about 50 crows. The bird was larger than a crow and had long, pointed wings and a long tail. The bird mostly flew with rapid wingbeats, but it would occasionally soar up well above the trees. We watched the bird for about 10 min. before it disappeared into the trees.

The bird was mostly gray above, except that the tail was noticeably browner. There was some darker barring on the tail. The underparts were lighter, with some darker streaks or spots visible on the belly. The underwing was mostly white with noticeable dark axillaries. The dark axillaries on this bird were not as extensive as those on the bird I saw at Big Creek on 5 Sep 1988. The head of this bird seemed paler than the upperparts, and definitely lacked any sort of a dark hood. Over all, the bird seemed very pale compared to Peregrine Falcons I have seen.

Similar species and how eliminated:The large size, wing shape, and dark axillaries eliminates all other falcons.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were o.k., although the bird was a long ways off. Estimated viewing distance was 400-500 yards. I used a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I have seen several Prairie Falcons in Iowa, as well as numerous Prairie Falcons in western states.

References consulted:none

How long before field notes were made?brief notes written immediately after sighting

How long before this form was completed?2 days