

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Merlin How many? 1Location? e. of Iowa City (e. of Fairview Golf Course), Johnson Co IAType of habitat? farmland along small creekWhen? date(s): 15 Apr 1984 time: 11:15 to 11:17Who? your name and address: Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St, Iowa City IA 52240others with you: Tom Staudt

others before or after you: _____

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.

A small falcon, judged to be slight larger than a Kestrel, flew over us in front of the car about 30 ft. above the road. We noted the narrow pointed wings and long narrow tail, all dark appearing bird, and steady direct flight and both shouted 'Merlin!' We stopped and watched the bird flying into the strong north wind and then it circled up and sailed in the wind for a while before continuing to fly into the wind. I could not pick up and make or color on the bird. Staudt saw a somewhat darker cap.

Similar species and how eliminated: Shape indicates falcon and eliminates sharp-shinned Hawk. All dark color and heavier direct flight excludes Kestrel. Size excludes Peregrine Falcon.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? no

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: best with strong north wind. 50 ft to several hundred yards. 8x binocsPrevious experience with species and similar ones: have seen a number of timesReferences and persons consulted before writing description: noneHow long before field notes made? 1 hr. this form completed? 1 hr.

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