

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species?Prairie Falcon

How Many?1

Location?2 mi. s and 1 mi. e of Kelly, Story Co.

Habitat?perched in a tree over a large, grassy field

Date?16-17 Dec 1986

Time?11:07-11:13 A.M. on 16 Dec and 8:10-8:23 A.M. on 17 Dec

Observers Name and address:Steve Dinsmore, Ames

Others who saw bird:Bart Ballard

Description of bird:When perched in the tree, the bird appeared to be crow sized or slightly larger. The bird was definitely larger than the several Am. Kestrels we had seen earlier that day(16 Dec). The underparts were light with darker streaking and speckling throughout. The back was a medium gray-brown. The tail was light with many narrow, dark bands. The crown and neck were the same color as the back. The throat was white. The face was also light with a dark whisker about an inch long angling back from the base of the bill. On the perched bird, the wings almost extended to the tip of the tail. After we had watched the bird for several minutes, it flew out of sight to the SW. In flight, the long tail and narrow, pointed wings were evident. The black axillaries were also seen several times as the bird flew away.

Similar species and how eliminated:The long tail and pointed wings make the bird a falcon of some sort. The size eliminates Merlin and Am. Kestrel. The black axillaries eliminate Peregrine Falcon and Gyrfalcon.

Viewing conditions and equipment:Viewing conditions were o.k. with very foggy conditions and visibility limited to 1/4 mile or less. Estimated viewing distance was 75 yards at the closest. I used Nikon 8 x 23 binoculars and a Bushnell 20-45x spotting scope.

Previous experience with species:I have seen several Prairie Falcons in Wyoming and South Dakota, plus numerous Merlins and Peregrine Falcons in Iowa.

References consulted:NGS Field Guide to the Birds of North America

How long before field notes were made?immediately

How long before this form was completed?6 hours