

46
PRAIRIE FALCON (1)

ills County, Highway 370, approx 1½ miles east of the Bellevue Bridge

October 20, 1981

11:30 a.m.--11:35 a.m.

Description:

Large Falcon, near size of No. Harrier; Upperparts pale brown; Long pointed wings with barred primaries and secondaries. Very distinct black axillaries, dark feathers extending into wing linings. Long rounded tail. Thin facial marking extending from eye through cheek.

Behavior:

The falcon flew out of an uncut cornfield, flying south across the highway in front of us. Then with steady wingbeats, turned toward us again, quartering over a field of corn stubble--gradually spiraling upward before continuing to the south.

Habitat: Missouri River bottomland; cornfields

Similarly appearing species:

The pale brown upperparts and black axillars eliminate Peregrine Falcon. Size and black axillars eliminate Merlin.

Experience: Babs Padelford and Tanya Bray have seen Prairie Falcons in western Nebraska and other western localities.

Distance 100'-400' guess
Clear, sunny day

Equipment:

8x30 Binoculars
6x26 "
8x30 "

Books Consulted: Birds of N.A. Robbins et al
Field Guide to Eastern Birds--RTPeterson
Field Identification Pamplet for N.A. Raptors

Both Peterson and Field I.D. Pamplet show the dark feathers in axillaries extending into the wing lining.

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