

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? PRAIRIE FALCON How many? ONE

Location? 5 miles north of Laurens, Pocahontas County, Iowa

Type of habitat? Open farm ground

When? date: FEBRUARY 1, 1988 time: 10:45 a.m. to 10:55 a.m.

Who? your name and address: RITA DEWALL R. 1 BOX 15 POCAHONTAS, IA

others with you: JUDY & HELEN CARLSON, RON REESE

others before or after you: OBSERVED ON PREVIOUS DAYS BY RON REESE,  
JUDY CARLSON, & RON HARMS, BUT UNDERWINGS NOT OBSERVED ON THOSE  
OCCASIONS

Describe the bird: Observed in flight only as bird left protection of  
barn and seemed to want back in! Noticed long pointed wings and long  
tails distinctive of falcons, light brown color on back with cream  
colored breast which was heavily spotted, saw narrow mustaches

Underwing pattern showed dark axillaries and wing coverts (black in the  
wingpits)

Similar species and how eliminated: MORE BROWN THAN PEREGRINE FALCON,  
BOTH FEMALE MERLIN AND PEREGRINE FALCON LACK UNDERWING PATTERN OBSERVED  
IN THIS BIRD

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

Viewing conditions: EXCELLENT LIGHTING UNDER PARTLY CLOUDY CONDITIONS,  
BLOWING SNOW HAD BEEN A PROBLEM EARLIER IN THE DAY BUT HAD LET UP  
CONSIDERABLY AT THIS TIME, PRAIRIE FALCON FLEW TOWARDS US OUT OF BARN  
BESIDE THE ROAD AND WE WERE PARKED APPROXIMATELY 300' FROM THE BARN,  
CONTINUALLY FLEW IN THE AREA AT TIMES BEING DIRECTLY OVERHEAD WITH FIELD  
MARKS DISTINCT EVEN WITHOUT BINOCULARS, USED 7 X 35 BINOCULARS AT TIMES

Previous experience with species and similar ones: HAVE NEVER OBSERVED  
PRAIRIE FALCON BEFORE, BUT HAVE OBSERVED PEREGRINE FALCON IN WISCONSIN

References and persons consulted before writing description:  
PETERSON'S, GOLDEN, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY FIELD GUIDES

How long before field notes made? SAME DAY this form completed? SAME  
DAY