

Middlewestern Prairie Region
(Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio)

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Merlin 2. Number: one
 3. Location Larson Marsh, east of Ames, Story County, Iowa
 4. Date: 2 September 1984 5. Time Bird seen: about 5 pm to 30 seconds(?)
 6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):
typical falcon shape, long narrow pointed wings & long narrow tail; half again longer than red winged blackbird; overall color brown; indistinct face pattern; breast tannish heavily streaked dark brown; tail brown boldly banded with dark brown.
 7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
 8. Description of behavior: ^{fast} flying very low over ground, flight determined - direct; made a half-hearted swipe at a ~~fly~~ flying Red Wing before continuing on north.
 9. Habitat - general: marsh in midst of corn & soybean fields.
specific:
 10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:
Sparrow hawk - kestrel; smaller, & has rust on tail or back; has bold face pattern.
 11. Distance (how measured)? 75 ft at closest 12. Optical equipment:
7 x 35 binoculars
 13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
heavy overcast; bird from south to north; going by to west of me.
 14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
seen once before in Iowa; several times in Kansas & South Dakota
 15. Other observers:
 16. Did the others agree with your identification?
 17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
 18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
A Field Guide to the Bird Peterson
Birds of North America Golden Press
 19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? notes 2
minutes afterward.
- Signature: *Paul M. [unclear]* Address: *1120 Maister*
Date: *8 Sep 84* City, State: *Ames Iowa 50010*