

Prairie Falcon
30 Jul 1982
north of Luther, Boone Co., IA
*Bruce Ehresman
IBL 53:36

Record Number: 82-28
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Bruce Ehresman

REFERENCE

Field Reports: none

Records Committee: IBL 53:36

VOTE: 4-III, 2-IV, 1-V

Description OK although undetailed. But refers to black patches once as at 'elbows' and once as at 'axillars'. ??

Even he has doubts.

Reasonable description. Record early date and at east edge of probable range, but fits pattern of early fall migration.

Acceptable. Observer familiar with species. Though color of back and other details were omitted in the brief observation.

Maybe. But I'm not convinced white rump patch and highly unlikely date are main problems.

REVOTE (at meeting, 20 November 1982): 6-IV, 1-V

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

by the Records Committee

of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: Prairie falcon

DATE SEEN: 30 July 1982

SITE OF OBSERVATION: N. of Luther, Boone Co., IA

OBSERVERS: Bruce Ehresman

DATE OF REVIEW: November 1982

METHOD OF REVIEW: discussion followed by secret ballot

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: IV

COMMENTS: The records committee regretfully classified this as a class IV sighting, in view of the brief time of observation, the uncertainty expressed by the observer, the unusual date of the sighting (most have been in winter), and the unusual location (much further east than most).

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

82-28

What species? Prairie FalconHow many? 1

Buone Co IA

Location? Along Hwy 17, 1/2 mi. N of jct. with county rd. E (2 1/2 mi. N of Lutter)Type of habitat? Harvested oat-field surrounded by cornfieldsWhen? date(s): 30 July, 1982 time: 10:50 AM to 10:51 AMWho? your name and address: Bruce Ehresman Rt 1, Ledges Rd, Buone IA 50036others with you: Marlene Ehresman

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.

I was driving south on Hwy 17 when I noticed a crow sized raptor being mobbed by blackbirds as it flew over a harvested oat-field next to the highway. As I stopped the truck for a better look, the bird flew across the road in front of me at about 30 yards distance. Marlene and I both noticed it had "very" pointed wings and a long, narrow, squarish ended tail. The whole underside of the bird appeared very light except for black triangle shaped patches near the elbows of the wings. Marlene noticed the upper side of the tail was distinctly barred, and I noticed the upper side of the bird appeared dark except for a whitish patch on the lower back.

Similar species and how eliminated:

The white patch on the lower back made me think "Harrier," but the black patches on the axillars of the underside of the wing and the pointed wings are falcon characteristics.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? Myself

If yes, explain: It is difficult to say this bird is positively a Prairie Falcon since we saw him for such a short time at such a distance.

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Sunny day; estimated distance by previous experience; didn't have binoculars with me - - naked eye observation.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Had seen 2 prairie falcons

in Nebr. Several yrs. ago - - have seen numerous harriers in Iowa and Missouri.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Birds of N. Am. - Robbins, Brun, Zim etc. • Water, Wren, and Game Birds of N. Am. - Nat. Geogr. Soc. A Field Guide to Birds - Peterson

How long before field notes made? Immediately this form completed? Aug. 2

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