

Prairie Falcon
8 Mar 1985
Obrien Co., IA
*Dick Bierman
IBL 55:62; 56:44

Record Number: 85-04
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Dick Bierman

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 55:62
Records Committee: IBL 56:44

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

IV, Probably was Prairie Falcon but not enough detail to rule out Peregrine. Assume it wasn't Harrier although rump not mentioned.

III, I am disturbed that black axillaries were not seen. Light color, date, and location may be enough to accept this record. Enough to call the bird a falcon.

V, Were "vertical darker brown feathers" axillaries?

IV, Probably correct but contrasting axillaries were not noted to further rule out imm. peregrine.

III, Prairie is more likely than Peregrine immature in March. Light brown back would indicate Prairie. Narrow mustache is a good mark (though not 100%). Too large for Merlin. Too small for Gyrfalcon.

III, Convincing--date and location good. Axillars not seen, but coloration well seen. Perhaps not diagnostic for Prairie, but satisfactorily eliminates other possibilities.

III, OK? Shape. No view of dark axillars. Distance not too bad.

REVOTE (at meeting, 5 Oct 1985): 4-III, 3-IV

85-04

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation
by the Records Committee
of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: Prairie Falcon
DATE SEEN: 8 March 1985
SITE OF OBSERVATION: O'Brien County
OBSERVERS: Dick Bierman
DATE OF REVIEW: October 1985
METHOD OF REVIEW: Committee discussion
CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: IV

COMMENTS: The main concern of the Committee was that the axillars were not seen (or described), and so the documentation could not be considered diagnostic. There was also not enough additional information given to rule out other possibilities such as Northern Harrier, Merlin, or immature Peregrine. These are rather remote possibilities, admittedly, but please see the first note below.

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.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

85-4

1. Species: PRAIRIE FALCON 2. Number: 1
 3. Location: 1 mile southwest of CALUMET IN
OBRIEN COUNTY
 4. Date: 3-8-85 5. Time seen: 3:00 to 3:01
 6. Description of size, shape, and color: LARGE, CROWSIZED
POINTED WINGS, LONG TAIL, LIGHT BROWN BACK
CREAMY TAN BELLY WITH VERTICAL DARKER BROWN FEATHERS.
NARROW DARK BAR NOTED ON SIDE OF HEAD
 7. Voice, if heard: NONE
 8. Behavior: FLYING IN A STRAIGHT LINE ABOUT 15 METERS ABOVE
THE GROUND
 9. Habitat: OPEN, AGRICULTURAL LAND.
 10. Similar species: PERIGRINE FALCON - BAR ON HEAD NOT wide enough,
MERLIN, THIS BIRD WAS BIGGER I GUESSED ABOUT A 30" WINGSPAN.
AN IMMATURE PERIGRINE BACK IS MUCH DARKER.
 11. Distance viewed at: 100 FT Optical equipment: NONE
 13. Light: GOOD, SUN ON BIRD.
 14. Previous experience with this species and similar species:
I'VE SEEN OTHER PRAIRIES IN WYOMING
 15. Other observers: NONE
 16. Did others agree: — 17. Other independent observers:
—
 18. Books and advice consulted: PETERSON'S NEW EASTERN FIELD GUIDE.
 19. How long after seeing this bird did I write this description:
2 hrs.
- Signature: Dick Bierman Address 901 HARRIS ST
Date 3-8-85 City, State CHEROKEE IOWA 51012