

Peregrine Falcon  
31 Jan 1984  
Ames, Story Co., IA  
\*Kelly Bostian  
IBL 54:17; 55:58

Record Number: 84-01  
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Kelly Bostian

LETTER

Bruce Peterjohn to Tom Kent, 20 March 1984 (see below)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 54:17  
Records Committee: IBL 55:58

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

III, Kelly took bird study course at Iowa State.

V, Poor view without optical equipment by unknown observer.

The date is unlikely for Peregrine and the location and behavior do not favor this species either. I cannot identify the bird from the description.

III, Not a good description, but observer seems to know falcons.

IV, Imm. Peregrine has streaked underparts (as does Prairie). Light was a problem in ID here. Habitat more likely for a Peregrine perhaps. Not completely convincing, except as large falcon species.

V, 1. The bird sounds like a Peregrine. 2. Prairie Falcon cannot be eliminated by tail pattern, though description of head does sound like Peregrine, not Prairie. 3. If the term 'barred' is used in the technical, birdwatching sense, this would have to be a Peregrine (if it is a falcon), but an adult. May not be used that way. 4. A key question, unanswered, is 'How did you know it's a falcon?' 5. Any falcon allowing a person to approach within 15 feet of its tree is probably an escaped falconer's bird, though this January it may simply have been starving.

LETTER from Bruce Peterjohn to T. Kent 20 Mar 1984, "...I was troubled by both of the questionable documentations and feel both are unacceptable. The description of the Peregrine Falcon was rather vague and contained a number of inaccuracies; his statement 'the undertail was barred and the chest showed a distinct barred pattern on a predominantly golden colored chest and belly' certainly does not describe a Peregrine. Other field marks are barely described if they are mentioned at all. The observer is inexperienced and the lack of optical equipment add to the uncertainty of this identification."

REVOTE (at meeting, 8 Sep 1984): no change in vote (V)

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation

by the Records Committee

of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: PEREGRINE FALCON  
 DATE SEEN: Jan 31, 1984  
 SITE OF OBSERVATION: Ames, Iowa  
 OBSERVERS: Kelly Bostian  
 DATE OF REVIEW: 1984  
 METHOD OF REVIEW: Circulation to committee by mail  
 CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: V  
 COMMENTS:

The Records Committee had some trouble with this documentation, primarily because of some inaccuracies and contradictions as a description of a Peregrine Falcon. The Prairie and Peregrine Falcons are not separable based on undertailpattern. The description of the underparts is suggestive of an immature bird, but the underparts are described as "barred", which is a character of adult Peregrines (somewhat like typical Eastern Red-tails).  
 The observer also appeared to have some light problems, and did not have binoculars.  
 In summary, the Records Committee felt that it should take a conservative stance with this record. Note that a "V" judgement means that the evidence was insufficient to judge.

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.

What species? Peregrine Falcon (immature) How many? 1Location? East side of Iowa State University CampusType of habitat? Tree top approximately 40-45 ft. east of Heady Hall (East Hall)When? date(s): Tuesday, Janr 31, 1984 time: 5:10 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.Who? your name and address: Kelly Bostian, 34 Fulmer, Lindenothers with you: noneothers before or after you: none

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.

From a distance of more than 50 yards the bird first appeared as only a large bird in a tree. However, the posture was wrong for a crow. Crows are common on campus. This bird sat more erect and looked more broad at the shoulders. I was looking into the sun. It made a swoop and flapped its wings once or twice and perched in a higher tree. Then I knew I was looking at one of Falconidae and it was much larger than an American Kestrel.

There is a construction sight below the tree and against the building with a snow fence up. I didn't want to cause a commotion crossing the fence so I was only able to approach within 10 or 15 feet of the base of the tree. From here the cheek patches were visible, a hooked bill was apparent, the under tail was barred and the chest showed a distinct barred pattern on a predominately golden colored chest and belly. I was standing in the shade of the building approximately the same distance away from the building as the bird. The setting sun was still high enough to shine directly on the bird in the top of the tree.

I ran inside the building and proceeded to climb the stairs to the third floor. The bird had moved to the tree it had originally been sighted in. I hung my head out an office window and was no more than 40 ft. from the bird. The bird was facing away and the back appeared

Similar species and how eliminated: (over please)

Prairie Falcon: Absence of dark terminal band on tail.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? n/a

If yes, explain:

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

unaided eye, stepped off distance from building to tree. (see description)

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have never seen prairie falcon

Have watched peregrines with Tony Selch (Roland Ia.)

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Tony Selch (master falconer) James Dinsmore (Professor, Animal Ecol. ISU)

How long before field notes made? 30 min. this form completed? 4 days

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

(dark cap + cheek patch)

black. Again, the bill was definitely hooked, but I couldn't honestly state that it was blueish or black. I am saying it was an immature peregrine because of the darkness of its plumage.

I know a master falconer and have been very close to peregrines in both adult and first-year plumage.