

RARE SPECIES DOCUMENTATION

Records of Vermont Birds

The following form has been prepared to encourage full documentation, when requested, of rare or unseasonal birds in the state of Vermont. These reports are put into a permanent file and should be as detailed as possible. New reports are reviewed annually by the Vermont Bird Records Committee, which evaluates records for their acceptability to future researchers and for inclusion in the state bird list.

Please print or type

SPECIES: Prairie Falcon

NUMBER OBSERVED: 1

OBSERVER MAKING REPORT: OTHER OBSERVERS (and addresses if available)
Rodney Olsen, Zachary Saxe and students from the Diversified Occupations Program

LOCATION: (place, township, county)
Otter Creek Rd., 1.7 miles north of the Jct. with Rte. 17 in Addison.

DATE: 12/9/14

TIME AND LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 5 minutes

DISTANCES FROM BIRD: Maximum 150 yards Minimum 50 yards

WEATHER:

wind direction _____ wind speed _____

sky cover Overcast/Snow light in relation to observer's position Behind
temperature _____

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: (make, power, etc.)
Binoculars 10x40

OBSERVER'S PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCE WITH THIS SPECIES OR SIMILAR FORMS:
Seen a few out west but only in flight.

OTHER DOCUMENTATION: Photo _____ Tape Recording _____ Specimen _____

If yes to the above, where is this information deposited? _____

HABITAT: (be as detailed as possible, include associated bird species)

Open field

BIRD'S BEHAVIOR: (feeding actions, manner of flight, displays or interactions, reaction to observer)

Bird was flushed from a perch when approached by our car. First impression was a large falcon. It

landed on top of a small barn and posed for a few minutes. The barn was approx. 50 yards away. When I put the binoculars on it I could see the white chest and breast. The head looked to big in proportion to it's body. The mustachial stripe was narrower than a Peregrine and very obvious on the pale face. The bird took flight and passed by broadside. The dark armpits were very obvious.

VOCALIZATION: (song or calls)

DESCRIPTION: (Describe what you actually saw during the observation. We hope that observers will take field notes during the observation and before consulting field guides, etc. Additional pages with sketches and copies of field notes are encouraged.)

Relative size and shape: Falcon, pointed wings and heavier than I had imagined.

Head (crown, cheeks, eye, throat, nape): Pale face, mustachial marks were obvious. Did not have the proportionally smaller head of a Gyrfalcon.

Feet and Bill (shape, color, length):

Upper back: Pale sandy brown.

Lower back and rump: Pale sandy brown.

Wings (shape, length, markings): Pointed wings.

Breast, belly, flanks, undertail coverts: Breast and belly were white and marked, but not streaked.

Tail (shape, length, markings):

I was impressed by the tail, it was pale and seemed wide/truncated. I'm unsure if that is conclusive.

IMPORTANT: WHAT SIMILAR SPECIES WERE ELIMINATED WHEN MAKING THIS IDENTIFICATION AND HOW WAS THIS BIRD DIFFERENT?

Peregrine- not the right color on the back, the breast and belly was white with spots and did not have the helmet.

Gyrfalcon- Color was not right for a juvenile Gray morph (too pale). Head was light and distinctly marked.

COMMENTS: (was age or sex determined?, etc.)

This report was written from memory

NAME (print) Rodney Olsen SIGNATURE (not req'd) _____

MAILING ADDRESS 8 Mountain View Lane, Vergennes, VT 05491

DATE 12/9/14

Return electronically (preferred) to: vbrc@vtecostudies.org or mail to: Vermont Bird Records Committee, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, PO Box 420, Norwich, VT 05055

Photos by Jim Meade:





© Jim Mead

12/10/2014



© Jim Mead

12/10/2014