

12-95-22

CFO-ORC FILE # 106860X

Accepted 6-1

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD | |

UNUSUAL RECORD | **XX** |

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: **Gyrfalcon** **Falco rusticolus**
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): **December 8, 1994** 1995 *OK to change*Number of birds seen: **1** Sex: **Unknown** Plumage: **Immature Gray Phase (Brown Morph)**Locality: **south of Lower Latham Reservoir along Weld Co Rd48** Elevation: **4800'**
Nearest town: **Lasalle** County: **Weld**Time(s) observed: **9:45am-11:00am ; 3:00-3:30pm**Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): **1 hr and 45 min.**Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers): **Joe Himmel, 1848 14th Ave, Greeley, CO 80631 (970-352-0288)**Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers): **unknown**Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light): **sun was behind bird for longest period of time. Was also viewed from behind, with sun behind observer.**Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): **10X binoculars; 80X Questar scope**Distance, and how measured: **60 feet at closest; estimated**If photographed, type of equipment and film: **No photos**Who else photographed the bird? **Unknown**Describe the birds behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying): **First seen on the ground as it fed on a recently killed duck at edge of canal. Bird flew about 40 yards carrying the carcass and settled back on the ground to finish its meal. Then flew to a post for several seconds and then moved to a mound about 75 yards from the road where it remained during the rest of the morning observation. When resighted in the afternoon, it had moved but was still on a mound in the area.**

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observed in field:

Large falcon, pointed but broad wings, robust, barrel-chested shape. Size of a buteo; Heavily feathered legs; Dull, but darkish cere; Head was marked with light supercilium, distinct moustachial mark; Some light feathering mixed with overall brown on back of head. Brownish back and tail with some slight gray mixed in. Tail was wide and lightly barred. Upper breast whitish, with dark spotting and striping on lower breast, heaviest near legs; Wing extension short, estimated that tail extended 5-7 inches beyond wingtip at rest. No scars, feather damage, bands or jessies observed. Flight was unique; Slow, deep but powerful strokes; Lifted teal or mallard easily. Axillars were only slightly browner and more uniform than belly but not dark or black.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):
None heard

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

Just south of a marshy area, but was only seen sitting on the mounds in a relatively flat, open agricultural field without trees.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Peregrine Falcon--wing extension; size too large for Tundra subspecies and lightness was incompatible for Peale's subspecies. Slower, deeper flight; Broad wings; Facial, breast and head pattern unique and did not resemble this species at all.

Prairie Falcon--wing extension, size of this bird was at least 50 percent larger; Bird was stout(broad wings) and barrel chested compared to sleek lines of Prairie. Axillars were not dark or black in flight.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

Himmel had seen this species several times in the past; Lisowsky had not. Both have seen similarly appearing species many, many times.

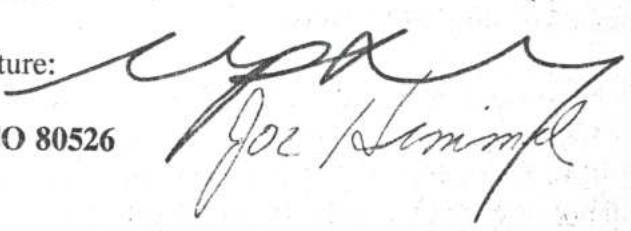
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification: **Did reference check in field to be sure all field marks had been noted and no other possible species had been overlooked.**

- a) at time of observation: **National Geographic**
- b) after observation: **Western Peterson, Peterson Hawks, Bent Life History, Hawks in Flight**

This report was written from reports made during **XX** after observation from memory

Date and time report was written: **December 8, 1995**

Reporting observer: **Bill Lisowsky**

Signature: 

Address: **2919 Silverplume Drive Ft Collins, CO 80526**

Return to:

Bill Prather

C.F.O. Official Records Committee

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