

ACCEPTED (98) - 7-0

(INDECISIVE) 5-2 Initial circulation

(INDECISIVE) 4-3 Recirculation

RECIRCULATED WITH 98 BATCH w/
ADDITIONAL INFO

CFO-RC FILE#: 1997-22

✓ recd 1-98

PHOTO

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
SIGHT RECORD FORM

RESULTS: _____

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

SPECIES: Gyrfalcon (Falco rusticolus)

DATE(S) OF OCCURRENCE: Found injured 12/13/97, observed in rehab on 12/17/1997 and 1/17/98.

NUMBER(S) OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: Unknown, likely female

PLUMAGE: Immature

EXACT LOCATION: Herman and Susan Dieterich, Wildlife Veterinarians, picked up this injured bird near the Bigelow Place, Cty Rd C and 57.

COUNTY: Saguache

NEAREST TOWN: Center

ELEVATION: 7600

LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 3 hours

TIMES OF OBSERVATION: in rehab

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY SAW THE BIRD(S): Susan called to ask me to come out and identify the bird they had picked up. She described it as "either a gyrfalcon or a prairie falcon on steroids" Her identification (the former) was correct in my opinion. Jerry Poe, local birder was with me on the 12/17/97 and wife Lisa 1/17/98. Both concurred.

LIGHT CONDITIONS (QUALITY, RELATION TO BIRDS POSITION) Low light in rehab on 12/17; overcast daylight, midday, 1/17 in the flight cage.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED: Not necessary

DISTANCE FROM BIRD (ESTIMATED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED) 1-2 feet

WAS THE BIRD PHOTOGRAPHED? yes IF SO, HAVE YOU SUBMITTED PHOTOS yes

WHO TOOK THE PHOTOGRAPHS? myself

DESCRIBE THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HABITAT IN WHICH THE BIRD OCCURRED:

Was found near a county road, near a duck carcass. Farmlands nearby but also near to waterfowl concentration area near Bigelows springs. Relatively flat outwash plains, alluvium from Rio Grande.

DESCRIBE THE BIRDS BEHAVIOR (FLYING, FEEDING, HABITS, BEHAVIORS USED IN IDENTIFYING THE SPECIES OR IN SUPPORT OF THE IDENTIFICATION): Injured with broken hip and femur. Did not fly, now perches on stump close to ground.

DESCRIBE THE BIRD IN DETAIL. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS REPORT. GIVE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS TO THE MARKS/FEATURES YOU USED TO IDENTIFY THE BIRD.

OVERALL SHAPE AND SIZE: Husky heavy looking but falcon shaped. Bird was slight recoiled when tape measured at 23.5 inches from beak tip to tail tip. Large size suggest female as well as personnal communication with Susan who felt birds behavior was more akin to females of the group, tend to be a little more aggressive relative to trackability (handling).

ANY NEARBY BIRDS TO COMPARE SIZE? In the flight cage, are both 1 adult peregrine falcon and one adult prairie falcon. It was awesome to see the size differences!

HOW YOU PLACED THE BIRD IN THIS GROUP: long pointed wings, falcon appearing face with dusky/brown face mask and light eye stripe, bird of prey bill, talons.

DESCRIBE PLUMAGE: Mostly grayish brown back, head tail wings, breast heavily streaked with brown.

HEAD, NAPE, EYE COLOR, AND THROAT: Grayish brown head, nape, throat white, eye color dark and large eyed.

BILL SIZE, SHAPE AND COLOR: Hawklike, bluish gray color, blue gray sere.

UNDERSIDES, BREAST, BELLY FLANKS, UNDERTAIL: See sketch attached. white breast, belly, sides, flanks with heavily streaked on all of those features. Undertail light colored.

LEGS: Bluish gray to greenish gray legs. We had some debate on this color since in the dim light on 12/17/97, the color was tough to discern.

BACK: Grayish brown to dark brown with each feather on the back lightly edged with lighted shade of same color.

WINGS: Grayish brown to brown, long, pointed, extent to half way through tail length. Underwing linings light with few darker streaks, primaries dark grayish brown

TAIL: Gray tail, barred, roundish appearing on reclined bird, ends on feathers worn.

DESCRIBE SONG/CALLS IF ANY: None

DISCUSS SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW YOU ELIMINATED THEM: This bird dwarfed other similar falcons, so first impression in my mind when she opened the cage door was of a turkey on a platter...it was huge. It immediately struck me that it was a falcon too with the evidence of mask. Bird was heavy appearing but still streamlined like a falcon. Later in the flight cage there was direct

comparison to prairie and peregrine falcons...which it greatly outsized. Lacks the dark mask of immature peregrine. Lacks the dark armpits of prairie and greatly outsizes both. Differs from immature goshawk because of this bird has mask, goshawks lack.

WHAT IS YOUR PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES?
Have never seen one before. Have seen numerous peregrine, prairie, goshawks.

LIST BOOKS, GUIDES, RECORDINGS, OR OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED AND HOW THIS INFLUENCED YOUR IDENTIFICATION (DURING AND AFTER OBSERVATION).

Wheeler's book on Hawk ID, Nat Geographic, Peterson Western Birds. All were reviewed during observation and after

THIS REPORT WAS MADE FROM NOTES MADE DURING and AFTER OBSERVATION OR LATER FROM MEMORY

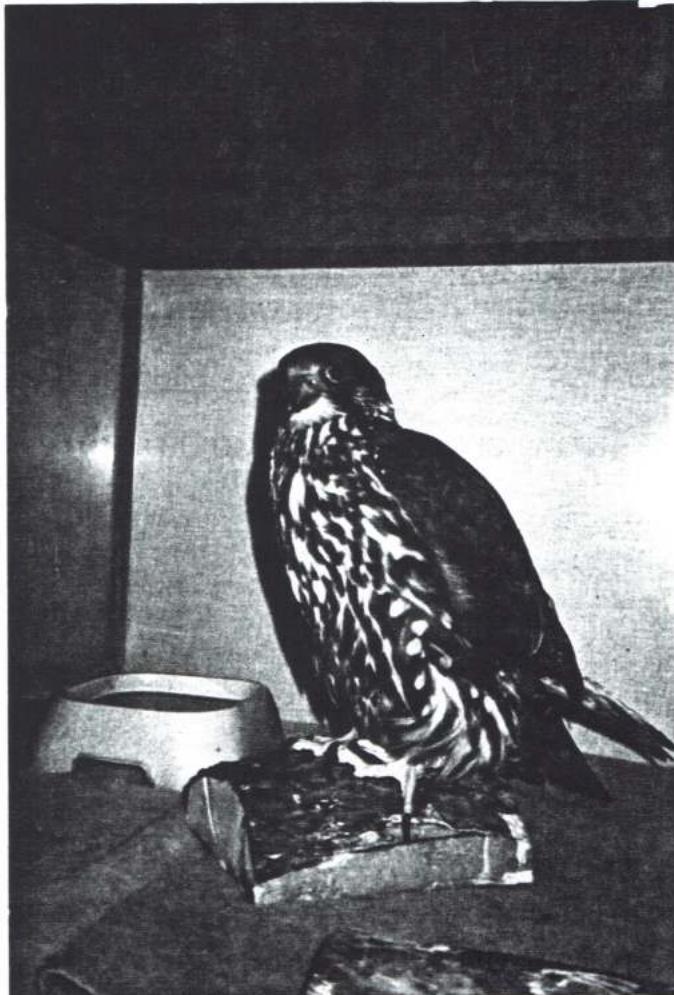
DATE OF WRITTEN REPORT; 1/23/98

REPORTING OBSERVER: John J. Rawinski

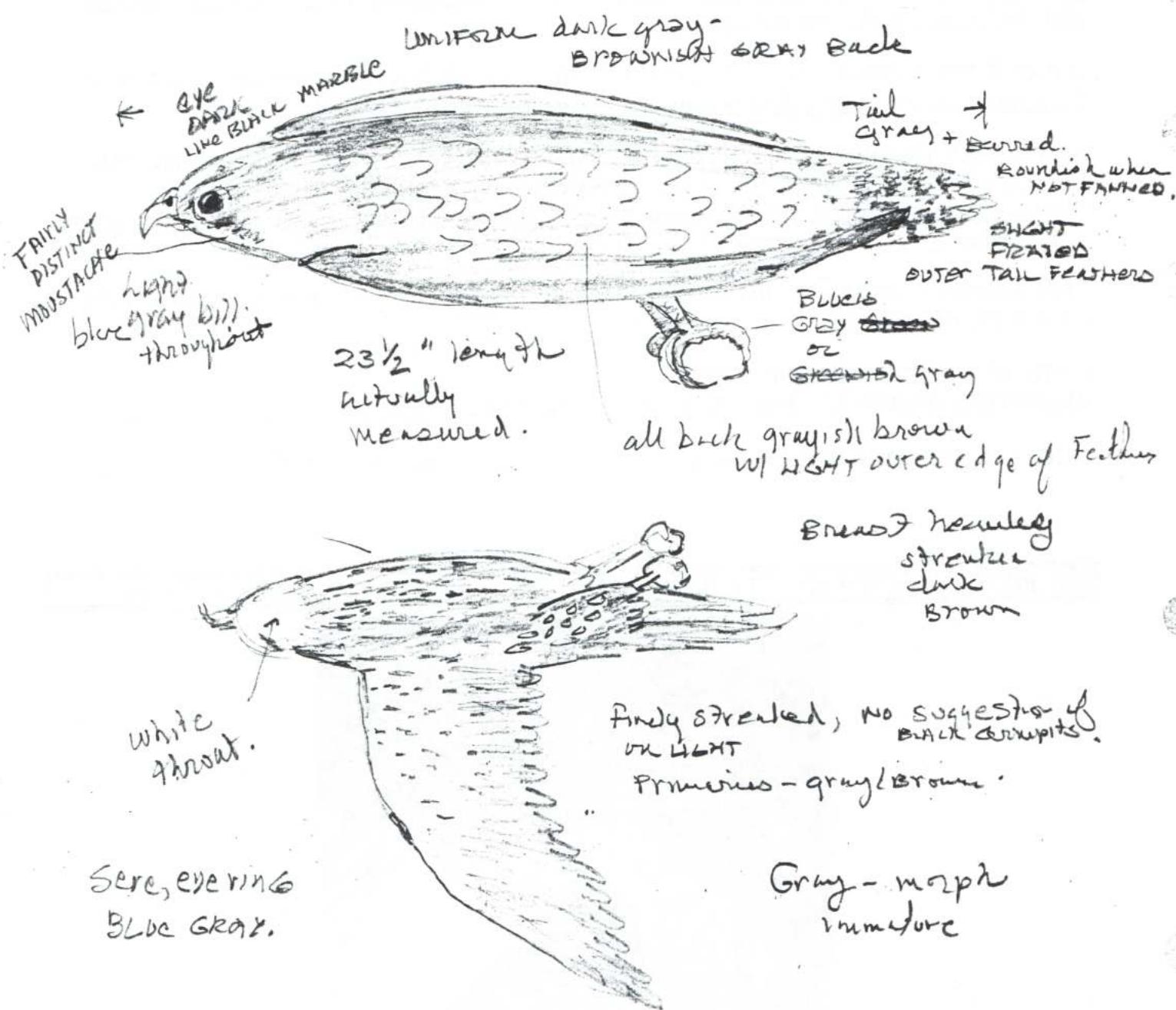
John J. Rawinski

SEND REPORT TO: MARK JANOS, 10 SEDUM COURT, PUEBLO, CO 81001

SEE PHOTO BELOW AND ATTACHED SKETCH MADE AT SITE, 12/17/97, BY AUTHOR.



12/17/97 @ Dietrichs.



found: 12/13/97, CYPRL C and 57, NE of Center.
near BIG CLOWNS

Herman + SUSAN PIETRICH.



FRISCO CREEK WILDLIFE HOSPITAL
AND REHABILITATION CENTER

DATE: December 3, 1998
TO: Committee Members
FROM: Frisco Creek Wildlife Hospital & Rehab. Center
SUBJECT: Gyrfalcon, FCWRC case #1721297

RECYCLED
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

1997-22
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ACCEPTED (7-0)

I wish to express our (Herman F. Dieterich DVM & Susan B. Dieterich) shared opinion of this falcon's origin, wild vs captive. Please consider the following histories and evidence to validate its wildness.

Facility history: FCWRC functioning 10 years as an all species wildlife center. Annual case load includes moderate numbers of American Kestrel, Merlin, Prairie Falcon, and Peregrine Falcon; ages range from nestling to adult. Additional educational permit 6 years includes non-releasable Peregrine Falcon.

Patient history abstract: 12/13/97 HFD & SBD picked up vehicle collision avian predator (Gyrfalcon) from roadside south Saguache Co., CO. Also retrieved avian prey carcass (Mallard hen) from roadside adjacent to falcon. Area being ranch house with open pond containing waterfowl. Initial medical exam revealed patient to be immature female (brown morph) grey morph, wt 1430g, l 23 1/2", w 50". Triage for critical condition of posterior spinal concussion and major organ contusions with concurrent orthopedic and respiratory insults. Over a period of two months, medical and surgical management of this falcon was insufficient to overcome subsequent metabolic deterioration. Falcon died 2/16/98. Necropsy performed by Dan Gould DVM PhD, Colorado Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

Evidence presented: Beak and talons naturally defined w/length and wear consistent with free-ranging feeding habits. Plumage clean and unabraded considering damage due to collision. Hunting and feeding on natural prey at time of injury. Defensive behavior relative to level of pain and stress notwithstanding injuries and treatment during hospitalization. Moderate amounts of depot fat present on gross necropsy. Heavy infestation of Serratospiculum ("a nematode common in free-ranging avians", Dan Gould DVM PhD) found on gross necropsy.

From our collective experience in medical management and convalescent care of falcons, we have no doubt that this Gyrfalcon in question was born and had remained in the wild until the December '97 accident.

Sincerely,

Communication Record

In late November 1998, I spoke with Kathy Konishi, Falcon Permit Specialist with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Glenwood Springs. I asked her if she knew of any Gyrfalcons under Permit in Colorado. She said the only one she has permitted was a gyrfalcon captured 3 to 4 years ago in northeast Colorado. Since the Saguiache Gryfalcon was a juvenile, there is no way that bird could have been the one she permitted.

I asked if there are any local falconers here in the San Luis Valley. She said one was in Crestone and one in Alamosa. Neither of them had gyrfalcons in their permitted keep.

I also tried to get opinions from Jerry Craig, Raptor Specialist with CDOW. He never responded to my request.

John Rawinski
12/7/98