

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review (to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for). Attach additional pages as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. English and Scientific names: Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*)
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
one
3. Locality: Parish: Vermilion
Specific Locality: White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area
4. Date(s) when observed: 28 December 2011
5. Time(s) of day when observed: approximately between 2:35-2:50 PM
6. Reporting observer and address: Donna L. Dittmann & Steven W. Cardiff
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s):
none
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):
none
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):
OK, but kind of glarry as evidenced by photos
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition):
10 X 42 Leica binocular (DLD); 10 X 50 Leica binocular (SWC)
11. Distance to bird(s): when overhead may have been as close as 50 feet, but more distant when coming in and after it circled headed away and landed in a field about ¼ mi. distant.
12. Duration of observation: SWC initially spotted the falcon and DLD got on to it almost immediately, both realized it was likely a Prairie Falcon and both jumped out of the truck, DLD to try to get photos while SWC watched the bird. The falcon flew by and then circled back over the truck, then headed away and landed in the field. First observation

period probably was only a few minutes and provided best views. Then SWC went to get permission to access field to attempt to get additional photos. DLD watched the bird sitting in the field for another 10 minutes or so until it got up and flew off because it was being harassed by a harrier. We could not locate it after we got permission to access the fields.

13. Habitat: vicinity of plowed fields, rice stubble, a small pond, and a distant tree line. Bird sat in a fallow field.

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):

Bird observed in direct flight, also circling overhead, resting on the ground in the field, harassed by a Northern Harrier.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species, body bulk, shape, proportions, bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species):

Large falcon. Our first impression was that of an approaching Peregrine but we quickly realized that it was not a Peregrine based on its somewhat lighter and more slender build. Crown, back, checks coloration a medium sandy brown. Blackish moustache stripe. Underparts whitish with dark brown spotting and streaking. Tail sandy brown banded with darker brown. However, the most prominent feature of the underparts were the blackish axillars that along with blackish underwing secondary and primary coverts formed the characteristic dark underwing panel. Eye dark, bill, cere yellowish; leg color not well seen. See photos.

16. Voice: silent.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Nothing quite similar.

Our greatest concern would that this bird was a falconer's escape or perhaps a hybrid falcon but this bird lacked jesses and did not show any characters that were not 100% Prairie Falcon.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Yes, photos obtained by DLD and SWC...one below; others at LBRC website.

19. Previous experience with this species: very familiar with this species sight from long history with it in West.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

None necessary. ID was obvious.

a. at time of observation:

b. after observation:

21. This description is written from: _____ notes made during the observation
(_____ notes attached?); _____ notes made after the observation (date: _____);
___X___ memory, plus using photos and photo EXIF data.

22. Are you positive of your identification if not, explain:

Yes

23. Date: ___ 14 February 2011 _____ Time: ___ 2:35 PM _____

24. May the LBRC have permission to display this report or
portions of this report on its website? _____ YES _____

If yes, may we include your name with the report? ___ Yes _____



additional photos by D. L. Dittmann

