

The area in which the bird was sighted is the campus of U.A.B. and is part of an urban renewal scheme. It may be characterized as containing blocks of classroom buildings interspersed with sparsely wooded vacant lots that have been cleared of shrubbery and are mowed regularly in the summer. It is bordered by small businesses and light industry to the north and west, a residential area to the south and the massive U.A.B. Medical Center complex to the east. This area, some 12-15 square blocks, supports sizable populations of Rock Dove and Mourning Dove (Zenaidara macroura). Killdeer (Charadrius vociferus) are often seen as well as may breed on the gravel roofs of some of the buildings. Birds of prey of several species have been seen there from time to time.

While this area is not unfrequented by raptors, it is decidedly unusual that a Prairie Falcon should be sighted there. This sighting is the first record for the state of Alabama and, to the best of our knowledge, the first record of the species for the southeastern region of the United States. There are very few records east of the Mississippi River. A. C. Bent (Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey, Dover Publications, New York (1961)) acknowledges several records for Minnesota, one record for Wisconsin, and three for Illinois, all in early winter and all prior to 1931. The fifth edition of The A.O.U. Checklist of North American Birds (1957) lists the species as casual in Minnesota, Illinois and Indiana.

The weather in the weeks prior to this sighting, according to National Weather Service records, included the passage of two cold fronts through Birmingham. A strong front arrived on the afternoon of January 19 with winds out of the northwest gusting to 28 mph and considerable precipitation, including a very light snow fall with no accumulation. The second and somewhat weaker front arrived February 1 from a westerly direction with winds gusting to 25 mph.

The unusual nature of this sighting now seasons with anxiety any periods we spend out-of-doors without binoculars (though they really weren't necessary in this case) or camera. We feel that the details of this observation are sufficient grounds for addition of Prairie Falcon to the Alabama state list with hypothetical status. We agree, however, that it should remain on the hypothetical list either until additional sightings are made in the state or until photographic evidence of its occurrence in this region is available. It should be noted that the Prairie Falcon is considered an endangered species and taking of specimens is prohibited by Federal law.

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BANDING ON THE BALDWIN COUNTY COAST

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On September 19 and 20, 1958, and at least twice each winter, spring and fall since August, 1971, the writers have banded at Fort Morgan. This produced a total of 2269 new banded birds of 96 species on 64 days or 35 birds per day. At Fort Morgan, the birds are netted on the north (bay) side just under one mile from the west end of the 21-mile-long peninsula. This site, known as the "Wall," is near the east boundary of Fort Morgan State Park, where a 5-foot-high wall bisects the peninsula. Birds cross this wall in huge numbers during migration, but it is somewhat exposed to the west, and catches are sometimes poor in the afternoon or when the wind is westerly. But, the funneling effect of the terrain and the use of alternate nearby sites make up for any disadvantages.

