



7-8-1965

Prairie Falcon imitates flight pattern of the Loggerhead Shrike

Gerald L. Richards
Provo, Utah

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/gbn>

Recommended Citation

Richards, Gerald L. (1965) "Prairie Falcon imitates flight pattern of the Loggerhead Shrike," *Great Basin Naturalist*: Vol. 25 : No. 1 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/gbn/vol25/iss1/8>

This Note is brought to you for free and open access by the Western North American Naturalist Publications at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Basin Naturalist by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

PRAIRIE FALCON IMITATES FLIGHT PATTERN OF THE LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE

White (Condor, 64, 1962:439-440) stated, "The normal mode of hunting for the prairie falcon is the expected falcon method of a swift direct flight about 30 to 200 feet in the air with a long, low angle stoop at the expected prey." On December 22, 1962, while attempting to trap prairie falcons at the Nevada Atomic Test Site (United States Atomic Energy Commission Contract AT(11-1)786), an unusual hunting method used by two prairie falcons was observed. Instead of hunting in the usual fashion, they left their perches in an undulating flight pattern similar to that of the loggerhead shrike. The hoax was executed so skillfully that the falcons were able to approach within 30 feet of their unsuspecting prey (White-tailed Antelope Squirrels). When the squirrels became alarmed and ran for cover, the falcons promptly returned to their usual onrushing attack to close the remaining distance. No squirrels were captured in this manner, even though six different flights were observed.

Another instance where a falconiform used the flight pattern of an unrelated species was reported by Mavrogordata (A Hawk for the Bush, 1960:4). He observed a European sparrow hawk using the characteristic wing beat of a lapwing to conceal its approach on some feeding starlings. In this instance the behavior was similar in that when the prey became alarmed the predator assumed its usual flight.—Gerald L. Richards, 1939 North 450 West, Provo, Utah.