

**PRAIRIE FALCON
(FALCO MEXICANUS)**



Description

Prairie falcons are the same size as peregrine falcons, ranging from 15-19 inches (37-47 cm) in length and a 35-44 inch (90-113 cm) wingspan. They are pale brown with cream-colored underparts. Diagnostic physical characteristics include the thin, black malar stripe and the

dark area from the axillaries to the trailing edge of the underwing-coverts.

Habitat

This species inhabits arid environs such as open plains or shrubsteppe habitats. Prairie falcons nest primarily on cliffs or bluffs, but will also nest in trees, on power line structures, on buildings, and inside caves. Most cliff nest sites have some degree of overhang and are usually located in the upper half of the cliff face.

Range/distribution

Prairie falcons occur throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

Photo: U.S. Geological Survey/photo by George Jameson
URL: <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/html/h3550pi.jpg>,
accessed September 9, 2002

References

- Steenhof, K. 1998. Prairie Falcon (*Buteo mexicanus*). In The Birds of North America, No. 346 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
- Dunne, P., D. Sibley, and C. Sutton. 1988. Hawks in Flight. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 45-50.