

Merlin wintering in a Syracuse park: On 8 March 1991, Mairead Connor was walking in Onondaga Park, on the west side of Syracuse, New York. She discovered a Merlin sitting on the tip of a spruce tree on the south edge of the park. It appeared to be a large, brown female. Later, a second, smaller and grayer bird flew in and the pair went to roost in a nearby grove of spruce trees. Connor and several other birders followed the pair until 12 April. They were not found after that date. On 5 September 1992, Connor saw a small male falcon fly into the park and land on the same spruce. Connor saw the bird daily until she moved from the vicinity 13 September.

No one followed the bird until 14 February, when Andrew Leahy checked and found the pair in the same area. They were still present on 3 March. The female came to the park from the direction of the city center just before dusk and perched at the tip of the spruce, which has several dead branches. The male usually circled the female when he appeared and sometimes was able to gain that preferred perch. If not, he perched on a telephone pole a few feet away. They sometimes were still present when it became too dark to see, but occasionally they have been seen going into the grove of spruce for the night. Onondaga Park is an active city park with joggers, dog-walkers, baseball games and various other activities. Nothing seemed to bother this pair of falcons.

Merlin is rarely seen in New York in the winter, and a pair roosting in a city park for two successive years has not been documented previously.

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[Color slides of the female Merlin which substantiate this record were submitted with this note, but they proved unsuitable for publication. — The Editor.]