



White Kestrel at Eastend, 2 August 79

Bob Stewart

WHITE KESTREL AT EASTEND, SASKATCHEWAN

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On the morning of 2 August 1979, I was talking with Bob Stewart, a Saskatchewan Fisheries and Wildlife Branch biologist, in an abandoned farm yard about 7 miles west of Eastend, Saskatchewan. Suddenly I noticed the white flash of a bird landing on a powerline not far from where we were standing. I casually glanced over, expecting to see one of the white pigeons I had often seen in this yard. However, I got quite a shock when I saw the bird was actually a Kestrel. The plumage was entirely white, with only a pale hint of rufous on the tail and wings, suggesting that the bird was perhaps a female. The eye appeared dark. The bird, intent

on several sparrows in the bushes directly below its perch, was bobbing its head and wagging its tail, mannerisms which characterize the American Kestrel.

After fumbling frantically for binoculars and camera, we observed the falcon for approximately 5 minutes from a distance of approximately 200 feet. It then flew about 1/4 mile to another shelter belt where it chased a small flock of blackbirds before perching on top of a dead cottonwood tree. At this time, another, normally colored male Kestrel flew in and began diving on the white bird. The white Kestrel dodged a few attacks and then resumed its own attack on the blackbirds. We quickly lost sight of the action.

Although several Kestrel family groups were in this area for the next few days, the white Kestrel was never seen again.