

WHITE-TAILED KITE RECORDS FOR ARIZONA

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The first documentation of a White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) in Arizona was obtained when Ellis photographed an adult on 11 August 1978 in the Altar Valley, Pima County. The record was made along the Elkhorn Ranch (Sabino Canyon) road about 5 km west of Arizona Route 286 (31° 49' N, 111° 27' W). The photograph is on deposit at the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Arizona, Tucson (No. 13377). The photograph, although not of good quality, shows the following diagnostic features: dark primaries contrasting with light secondaries; dark wrist mark on under wing coverts; light head, tail, and underparts; heavily feathered tibio-tarsus. The dark lesser coverts of the more distant wing are less clear. The general shape of the bird is also characteristic.

Ellis observed the kite intermittently between 0720 and 0745. It passed within 75 m and he saw all diagnostic field characters as well as the kite's characteristic wind-hovering behavior. The general area is a mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*) and grass (*Bouteloua* spp., *Aristida* spp., etc.) savanna.

No specimen records exist for Arizona. There are three undocumented sight records, all of adults: one along the west side of the Dragoon Mountains, Cochise County, 6 November 1972, Douglas Danforth; one over the Blue Point cottonwood grove on the Salt River a few miles east of Phoenix, Maricopa County, 25 February 1973, R. Roy Johnson, Jim and Ann Simpson; and one about 7 km south of the junction of Arizona Route 186 with the Kansas Settlement Road, Cochise County, 2 February 1975, Sue Burk (all pers. comm.).

Most probably these kites are emigrants from the population along the southern California coast, ca. 550 km distant, or northwestern Baja California Norte.

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Sketch by Narca Moore