



Square-tailed Kite *Lophoictinia isura*

What do they look like? Large, brown kite similar in size and appearance to a Black or Whistling Kite. Square-tailed Kites usually have a pale head and 'scruffy' appearance and you may notice more reddish feathers than the other two species. Square-tailed Kites have a dark band along the end of the tail. They fly with wings slightly upswept, which is also different to Black and Whistling Kites. The tail is usually fanned while in flight, similar to a Black Kite's.

Where do they live? Square-tailed Kites are uncommon across the region. They are listed as rare in Queensland legislation. They prefer forest and woodland habitats, often near water. They sometimes hunt over cleared or very open habitats, but are unlikely to live there permanently.

What do they need to live, eat and breed? Square-tailed Kites mostly hunt small birds in the tree canopy. They are adept at raiding nests for small birds. They also frequently eat insects, reptiles and occasionally small mammals. Square-tailed Kites may become nomadic if conditions are unfavourable, but once a pair nests they usually breed there over many years.

When might I see (or hear) them? Any time of day, usually circling casually over woodlands.

What management actions affect this species? Maintaining moderate to large areas of intact woodland benefits Square-tailed Kites. Suitable nesting trees are particularly important for this species. If you are lucky enough to find a nest, avoid disturbing it. Historically, shooting and egg collecting have been significant problems for Square-tailed Kites. Broad scale clearing reduces food opportunities for this bird predator.

How do they benefit the land I manage? Square-tailed Kites are important predators. By preying upon smaller birds, they help regulate numbers of those species. Where unwanted large flocks of birds such as miners or Galahs occur, they hunt and keep numbers of these species in check. Their presence may help disperse flocks as well.

Similar species: Whistling Kite (*Milvus sphenurus*), Black Kite (*M. migrans*), Spotted Harrier (*Circus assimilis*), Swamp Harrier (*C. approximans*).

