



Black-shouldered Kite

Name	Scientific	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>
	Common	Black-shouldered kite
Description	Black-shouldered kites measure between 33-38cm in length, the males are slightly smaller than the females. Their bodies are white with grey and white wings. As their common name suggests, they have a distinctive black patch on the shoulder of their wings. They have a black bill and a red eye.	
Habitat	These birds like to hunt over open areas with low vegetation, particularly woodlands, grasslands and farmlands.	
What it feeds on	Small mammals, small birds, small reptiles and <u>invertebrates</u> .	
Where it feeds	They hover in the air before plunging to the ground to grab their prey with their powerful <u>talons</u> .	
Breeding	Breeding takes place between April-October when 3 or 4 young are raised. The male's job is to hunt and provide food while the female sits on the eggs. The young <u>fledge</u> in about 5 weeks.	
Effects on other species	These birds help to keep rodent populations under control.	
Did you know?	During the breeding season male and female black-shouldered kites perform aerial acrobatics with each other by soaring and fluttering together in mid-air, sometimes with their claws locked together. The slightly larger female then carries the dangling male down. Like all raptors (birds of prey), black-shouldered kites regurgitate pellets which contain undigested bones, fur and skins from the animals they have eaten.	

