



Tips on How to Identify Soaring Birds

Black-Breasted Buzzard (*Hamirostra melanosternon*)

Size: 51-61 cm long

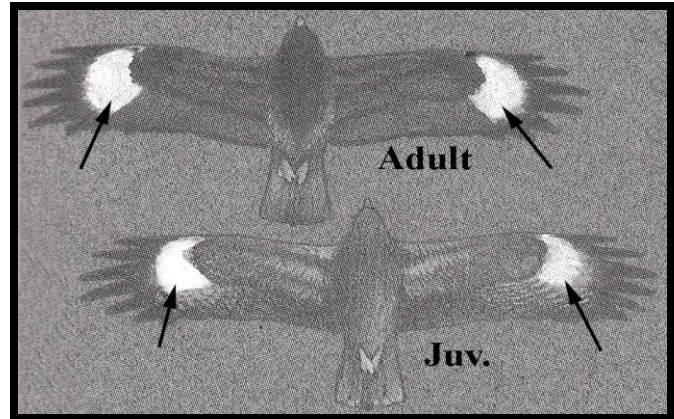
Wingspan: 150 cm

Colour: Blackish above and below with rufous nape, shoulders and thighs. Prominent white windows on the underside of the wing.

Call: short sharp calls.

Distinguished by: Large and robust with short tail. Prominent white windows on the underside of the wing (see right).

Habitat: Found in open woodlands and savannas, and in arid areas stream beds lined with Coolibahs and Red Gums



Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*)

Size: 48-55 cm long

Wingspan: Up to 120 cm

Colour: Dark grey-brown to black.

Call: weak, "whinnying"

Distinguished by: Forked tail, often twisted in flight. Often seen in flocks of 5 or more. Soaring flight pattern.

Habitat: Uncommon in woodland and savanna



Black Shouldered Kite (*Elanus axillaris*)

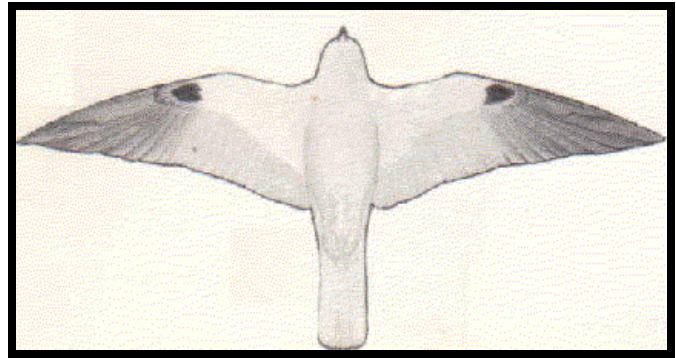
Size: 33-38 cm long

Colour: Body white, wings grey and white with prominent black shoulders.

Call: Harsh “kar” or quiet “chep”

Distinguished by: Black shoulder markings, small black patch under wing and on wing tips. Similar to Letter-winged Kite but lacks black “W” markings on the underside of the wing.

Habitat: Prefers woodlands and partially cleared forests



Brown Falcon (*Falco berigora*)

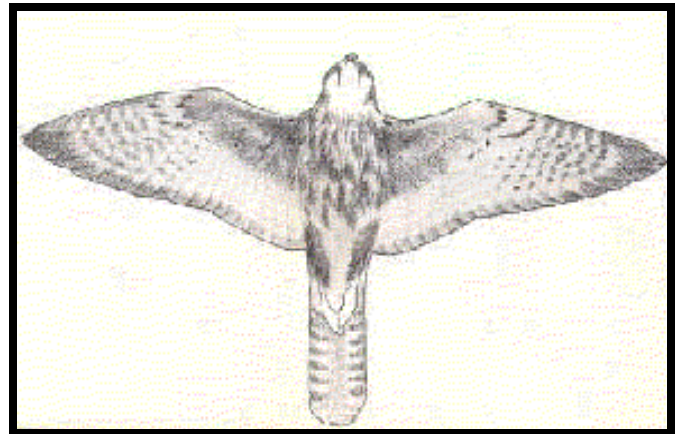
Size: Female 50 cm long, Male 45 cm long

Colour: Very variable in colouration (pale sandy brown to almost black). Three basic forms occur: *red phase* with reddish plumage; *brown phase* with brownish plumage (shown bottom right); and *dark phase* with very dark-brown plumage above and below. The red form is most likely to be seen inland.

Call: Loud cackling calls, uttered frequently. 'Yeah-cook', 'yeah-cook-uk-uk'.

Distinguished by: Upswept wings, slow over-arm wing beats, and slow, hovering flight. Barred tail and pale underwing. There are usually pale patches on the hind neck, obvious when the bird looks away.

Habitat: Primarily open grassy woodland and can also be found in forested country



Little Eagle (*Hieraaetus morphonoides*)

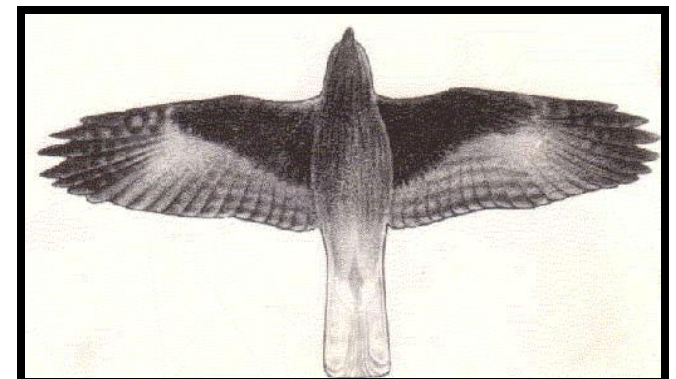
Size: Female 55 cm long, Male 48 cm long

Colour: Two colour phases. The more common light-phase birds are brown with black flight feathers and paler bars on wings. Dark-phase (shown bottom right) birds are dark brown and black all over, except for paler bars on wings. Juvenile birds have chestnut coloured underparts.

Call: Loud rapid 'wh-whee-whit' or 'kuk-kuk-kuk', or a loud slow 'swk swk swk'.

Distinguished by: Short square-tail, broad wings with pale bands, feathered legs, slow wing beat and easy gliding flight.

Habitat: Wooded country



Nankeen Kestrel (*Falco cenchroides*)

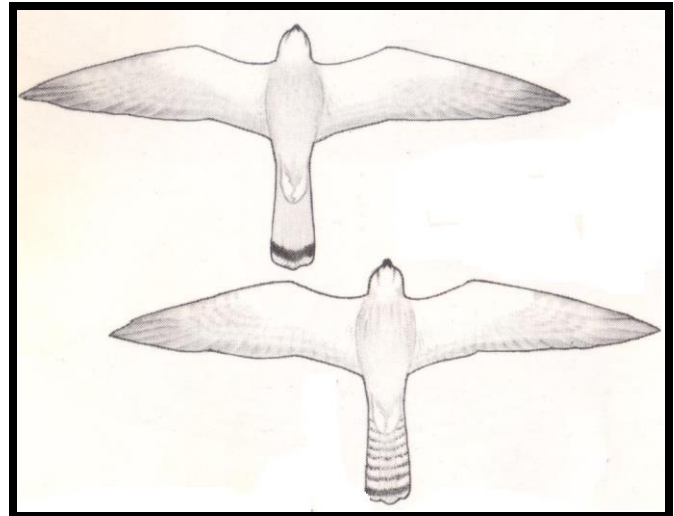
Size: Female 35 cm, Male 31 cm

Colour: Male has a pale blue-grey head, black wing feathers with pale streaks, pale grey tail with a white tip, underparts are white, and there are dark streaks on the breast. The female has a rufous head, and a rufous tail with black bars.

Call: A rapid 'kek-kek-kek-kek', a quavering 'ee agh', followed by slow clucks 'tek-tek-tek'.

Distinguished by: They glide and soar with wings outstretched. Their pale underparts appear white to the observer below.

Habitat: Common in most country but requires open grassy areas for hunting so is most common in open woodland and agricultural land.



Wedge-Tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*)

Size: Female 100 cm long, Male 90 cm long

Wingspan: 2.5 metres

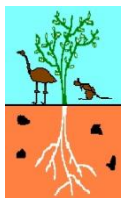
Colour: Adults are black with grey-brown nape, wing-coverts, and undertail-coverts. Juveniles are brown with brownish-white undertail-coverts.

Call: Repeated whistling 'yessir' and 'coo-ee-el'; yelping 'pseet-you'; and cat-like screeching, especially when disturbed from the nest.

Distinguished by: Large size (largest bird of prey in Australia), dark colour, long wedge-shaped tail, fully feathered legs, soaring flight.

Habitat: Widespread throughout Plains and forests.

Winter time wedge tails return south and southern raptors return north normal seasonal distribution of change



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