

White-tailed Kite

Elanus leucurus

A medium-sized raptor of open grasslands and savannas, the White-tailed Kite is readily identified by its bright plumage and its habit of hovering while hunting for small mammals.

Keys to Identification

Adult Description

Medium-sized hawk. Long, narrow, pointed wings. Long white tail. Gray back and wings. White face and underside. Black spot on inner portion of wings. Eyes red.

Immature Description

Juvenile similar to adult, but with buffy streaks on breast and head, gray with white-tipped (scalloped) feathers on back, and yellow eyes.

Cool Facts

- During the nonbreeding season, the White-tailed Kite roosts communally, with more than 100 individuals counted at some roosts.
- Although some populations fluctuate regularly in size, it is unknown whether the White-tailed Kite is migratory, nomadic, or both.

Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 12.6 - 15 inches
- Weight - 10.6 - 12.7 ounces

