

Common Name/Scientific name: Brahminy Kite / *Haliastur indus*

The Brahminy Kites are medium-sized raptors that are easily recognized by the white head and chest. They are also known as Red-backed Kites, White-and-red Eagle Kites or White-headed Kites. The Brahminy Kite is widespread across northern Australia, mainly along the coastline from Western Australia to northern New South Wales, and is more common in the north of its range.

Description: The Brahminy Kite is a medium-sized raptor (bird of prey), with a white head and breast. The rest of its body is a striking chestnut brown. The very tip of its tail is white. The wings are broad, with dark 'fingering' wing tips and the tail is short. The legs are short and not feathered, the eye is dark and the lemon yellow coloured bill is strongly hooked.

Feeding & Behaviour in the gardens: The Brahminy Kite is a bird of the coast, particularly mangrove swamps and estuaries. It is occasionally seen over forested area of the Maroochy gardens, and over the lagoon. It feeds on carrion (dead animals), insects and fish. It swoops low over water, the ground or tree tops and snatches live prey or carrion from the surface. It also steals from fish-hunting birds, snatching prey in flight.

Breeding and Nesting: The nest of the Brahminy Kite is built in living trees near water, often mangrove trees. The nest is large, made from sticks, seaweed or driftwood and lined with a variety of materials such as lichens, bones, seaweed and even paper. Both parents incubate the eggs and the young are fed bill to bill with small pieces of food. They have never been observed nesting at Maroochy gardens.

Similar Species in the gardens: The adult Brahminy Kite is unmistakable, though juveniles may be confused with the Whistling Kite (longer tail and distinctive underwing pattern).

