



Black-shouldered Kites Feeding on Rabbit. On September 16, 1973, a pair of Black-shouldered Kites, *Elanus notatus*, was found nesting at a height of about 6m, in a mallee tree, on the western edge of the Sunraysia irrigation area. The nest contained four eggs, which, a week later, were hatched.

On October 10, a tower with hide was erected about 9m from the nest, but I was only able to briefly visit the nest once during the following two weeks. At that time an adult bird was seen to bring mice to the young on two occasions.

When I approached the tower on October 27, three young Kites flew from the nest, so I entered the hide and watched the remaining bird which still a few days from flying, hoping that it might be fed by its parents. After an hour had passed two young Kites suddenly returned to the nest and began squawking and looking up expectantly. Shortly afterwards an adult Kite crashed down onto the far side of the nest. It hung there for a few seconds, wings beating heavily, then struggled over the side of the nest, dragging a freshly killed, three-quarter grown rabbit.

Whether the rabbit was killed by the Kite, by a car, or was pirated from another bird, is a matter for conjecture. The adult bird then flew to a branch above the nest, while the young birds tried unsuccessfully to feed off the rabbit. After a few minutes the parent bird returned to the nest and tore open the rabbit, and the young were then able to feed themselves.

Lindsay Cupper, Merbein, Victoria. 29/5/1975.