

Red Kite

With its strikingly red-brown feathers and elegant wingspan, this majestic bird of prey exudes a sense of regality and grace as it glides effortlessly through the air. Watching the Red Kite in flight, one can't help but be awed by its beauty and power, as it soars with a freedom that seems almost otherworldly. Truly, the Red Kite is a symbol of nature's beauty and wonder, reminding us of the magic that can be found in even the simplest of things.

Characteristic	Description
Common Name	Red Kite
Scientific Name	Milvus milvus
Colour (s)	Rusty-red, brown, and grey
Average Length	60 – 70 cm
Average Height	18 – 20 cm
Weight	800 – 1200 g
Type of Bird	Bird of prey, raptor
Origin country (ies)	Europe, Western Asia, Northern Africa
Month it comes to India	Winter months (November – February)
Location in India	Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu & Kashmir
IUCN status	Least Concern

Features



The Red Kite is a majestic bird of prey, known for its striking appearance and impressive aerial skills. The Red Kite has a distinctive reddish-brown body with a white head and tail. Its wings are angled and sharply pointed, with black markings at the tips. The Red Kite stands around 60-70cm tall (24-28 inches) when perched. These birds typically weigh between 800-1200g (28-42 oz), with females being slightly larger than males. Red Kites are known for their graceful and agile flight and can reach speeds of up to 70 km/h (43 mph) when diving or chasing prey. These birds have a body length of around 60-70cm (24-28 inches) from beak to tail. The Red Kite's wingspan is impressive, measuring around 1.5 meters (4.9 feet) wide.

Habitat and Food

Its natural habitat consists of a range of open habitats with a mix of woodland and farmland, including hills, moors, and grasslands. In these areas, the Red Kite prefers to roost and nest in tall trees, where they can survey the surrounding landscape for potential prey.



The Red Kite is an opportunistic predator, feeding on a variety of prey, including

in
g
sm
al
l
ma
mm
al
s
su
ch
as
vo
le
s,
mi
ce
,
an
d
ra
bb
it
s,
as
we
ll
as
bi
rd
s,
re
pt
il
es
,
am

ph
ib
ia
ns
,
an
d
in
ve
rt
eb
ra
te
s.
Th
ey
ar
e
al
so
kn
ow
n
to
sc
av
en
ge
on
ca
rr
io
n,
in
cl
ud
in

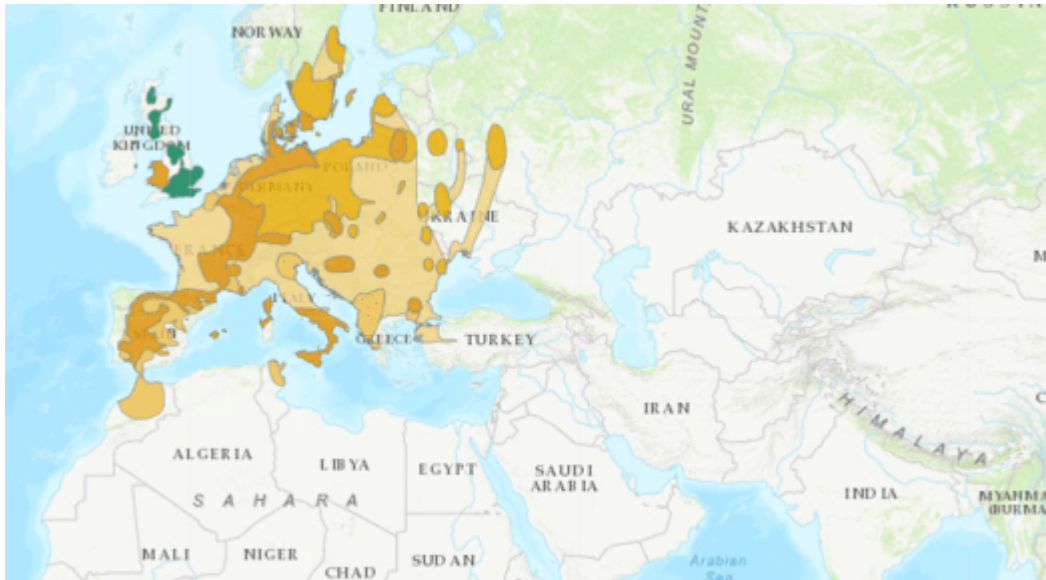
g
ro
ad
ki
ll
an
d
ot
he
r
an
im
al
re
ma
in
s.
Th
e
Re
d
Ki
te
's
di
et
is
di
ve
rs
e
an
d
ad
ap
ta
bl

e,
al
lo
wi
ng
it
to
th
ri
ve
in
a
ra
ng
e
of
di
ff
er
en
t
ha
bi
ta
ts
.

Migration

Red kites are a migratory bird species that breed in Europe and western Asia and winter in Africa and South Asia. Some populations of red kites from Central Europe migrate to India during the winter months.

These red kite
originate
from countries
like Germany,
Poland,
Hungary,
and th



e
Cz
ec
h
Re
pu
bl
ic
,
wh
er
e
th
ey
br
ee
d
du
ri
ng
th
e
su
mm
er
mo
nt
hs
. Th
ey
be
gi
n
th
ei
r

mi
gr
at
io
n
to
In
di
a
ar
ou
nd
Se
pt
em
be
r
or
Oc
to
be
r,
ar
ri
vi
ng
in
In
di
a
in
th
e
fo
ll
ow
in

g
mo
nt
hs
.
Th
e
ki
te
s
ty
pi
ca
ll
y
st
ay
in
In
di
a
un
ti
l
ar
ou
nd
Ma
rc
h
or
Ap
ri
l,
wh
en
th

ey
be
gi
n
th
ei
r
re
tu
rn
jo
ur
ne
y
ba
ck
to
th
ei
r
br
ee
di
ng
gr
ou
nd
s.

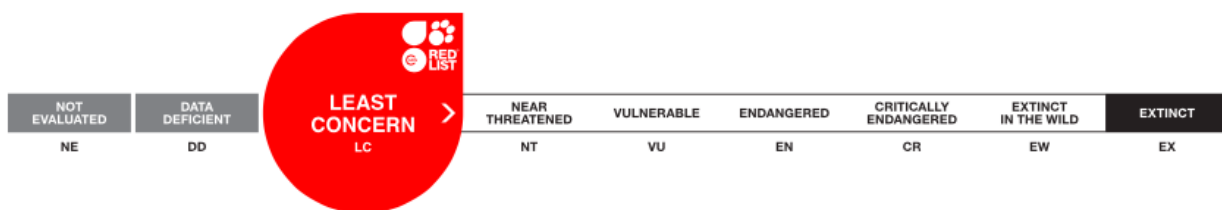
In India, red kites can be found in various states and geographies, including the northern plains, foothills of the Himalayas, and the western and eastern coasts. They are known to gather in large numbers in some areas, such as the Chambal River Valley in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, where they come to feed on the carrion of domestic animals.

The purpose of red kites coming to India is primarily for

wintering and feeding, as they are scavengers and feed on carrion. Some red kites may also breed in India, although this is less common. During their time in India, the kites roost in trees or on man-made structures, such as pylons or buildings.

IUCN Status

The IUCN Red List currently lists the Red Kite as a species of least concern, with a stable population trend.



However, the Red Kite has faced significant declines in the past due to habitat loss, persecution, and poisoning. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Red Kite was heavily persecuted in Europe due to its association with carrion, and populations declined sharply. In the mid-20th century, the widespread use of pesticides such as DDT further threatened the species by causing declines in prey populations and poisoning individual birds.

Conservation efforts in recent decades have led to the recovery of Red Kite populations in some areas. Habitat restoration and protection, along with measures to reduce poisoning and persecution, have helped to stabilize populations in many parts of Europe. The Red Kite is also protected under the European Union's Birds Directive, which aims to conserve all wild bird species within the EU.