White-breasted Woodswallow - *Artamus leucorynchus*

White-breasted Woodswallow perched on an overhead electrical cable at Windorah, south-west Queensland.

White-breasted Woodswallows gathered at Daly waters, Queensland.

The White-breasted Woodswallow - *Artamus leucorynchus* - has a slate-grey face, hood, wings and back merging into brown and darker tail. There is no white tip on the tail as commonly found in other woodswallows. Rump is white. Breast, belly and underside are white with a sharp division between the face and the dark tail. Bill is bluish, tipped black. Eye is brown. Male and female similar. 17 centimetres.

Lives mainly in tropical woodlands, rarely far from fresh water; range is extended along tree-lined watercourses. An aerial feeder, it flutters over water or trees in search of insects which are caught in the open bill in flight.
Larger prey are usually swallowed whole, sometimes larger items are dismembered in flight with the foot and eaten. White-breasted Woodswallows rarely land on the ground.

A sociable bird often cramming together along a branch; they roost at night also crammed along a branch usually under sheltering foliage.

Breeding takes place from August to January. The nest is an open bowl of twigs and grass often in an exposed tree crotch 10 to 30 metres above the ground. Three or four eggs are laid, white with purple-brown blotches at the larger end; oval in shape, 23 x 17 mm. Both parents incubate the eggs and feed the nestlings, often helped by other adults in the group.

A common bird. Sedentary in the north, seasonally nomadic elsewhere. In Western Australia moves south in winter and in eastern Australia migrates south in spring; some flocks reach the Murray-Darling system to breed.

Information