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| common name | Killdeer |
| scientific name | <i>Charadrius vociferous</i> |
| phylum | Chordata |
| class | Aves |
| order | Charadriiformes |
| family | Charadriidae |
| habitat | grasslands, coastal habitats, ponds, rivers, farmlands, gravel roads and rooftops |
| size | 25 cm tall |

description The Killdeer has a short neck and a chubby, brown body, with a white underside and a brown face. Two black bands cross the neck and chest.

fun facts One of the most interesting things to see is the broken-wing display of a parent Killdeer. If you approach a Killdeer nest, the parent will move quickly away from the nest and flutter about on the ground, crying and pretending to have a broken wing. When you follow the limping Killdeer, it will remain several steps ahead of you, always moving further and further away from the nest. By pretending to be an easy meal, the parent lures the predator (you) away from the eggs.

life cycle In March, Killdeer select mates and build a small nest on the ground, often out in the open. The female then lays 4 cream-colored eggs, speckled with black and brown. For 24 to 28 days, the male and female take turns sitting on the nest. A few hours after hatching, the baby birds follow their parents to feeding areas.

ecology The Killdeer eats many insects, including beetles, grasshoppers, flies, and Mosquitoes. It also preys on aquatic invertebrates, worms and some seeds. Its main predators are larger birds like hawks. Ground predators like raccoons, foxes and coyotes may eat the eggs and young of Killdeer.

conservation Killdeer can live in many different habitats, not all of them natural. They manage to live in cities. They sometimes make their nests on gravel rooftops and around parking lots. Because they are can live around humans, their population is not as threatened by development as species that require undisturbed habitats.

investigate

Killdeer are named for their call, "killdee, killdee, killdee", or "dee, dee, dee". If one calls and attracts your attention, you may be getting too close to its nest. Killdeer often build their nests in the open, rather than in the tall grass. They like to build them near vernal pools, where the plants are very short. What advantage might this provide for the Killdeer?

Even though it sits out in the open, the nest can be very hard to see because its colors blend in with the surrounding plants. What does this disguise do for the Killdeer?

