

Bird of the Month - May

Killdeer



Killdeer (non-breeding plumage)



Baby Killdeer



Killdeer (Breeding Plumage)

IDENTIFICATION

- Males and females look alike
- Brown back with reddish-orange rump, two breast stripes, forehead stripe

FOOD

- Water bugs, earthworms, snails, land bugs like grasshoppers and beetles

PREDATORS

- Falcons, raccoons, skunks and snakes (feeding on young), gulls and crows

BEHAVIORS AND FUN FACTS

- The Killdeer is so called because its call sounds like—KILLDEER!!!
- The Killdeer belongs to a group of birds called plovers
- Killdeer nest on the ground in a hollowed out scrape
- Their eggs are camouflaged and blend into the gravel background
- Adult Killdeer will do the “broken wing display” where they extend their wings and attempt to look crippled in order to draw predators away from their young or their nest
- To guard against large hoofed mammals stepping on their nests, the killdeer takes a different approach. It fluffs up its feathers and scares the mammal by rushing it noisily
- Young can walk within minutes of hatching and are about the size of a large (rather fluffy) kernel of popcorn
Look for the babies in June-July.