

The Killdeer usually arrives during the first week in April and a little later the birds have chosen their summer homes. Pebbly or rocky pastures and hillsides, near ponds, are their favorite grounds for nesting purposes. From April 24th to May 6th the set of three or four eggs may be found in such localities. The novice may have some difficulty in discovering the nest amongst pebbles and lichens so cunningly are the eggs placed and so well do they harmonize with their general surroundings; but the experienced eye can detect the eggs some yards off. The saucer-shaped nest is generally encircled by pebbles or stones and is lined with lichen, pieces of wood and weeds, manure and pebbles. One nest was located amongst stones near a stone fence. One pair of birds were successful in raising a brood alongside a wagon road running through a pasture.

During the mating season the birds are evidently nervous, as they make many attempts in excavating holes or nests in the ground, or perhaps these are only decoy nests. The real nest, however, is usually not very far away from such endeavors. In two instances the bird has been flushed off the nest a few feet away, but this is the exception rather than the rule. If one is watchful the bird may be seen running quietly away from the nest, but I believe the birds are off feeding most of the time, especially in bright, warm weather. The eggs have often been found with no birds in sight. Usually, however, they are very alert and soon make their presence known should anyone pass near the vicinity of the nest. After the nest is found it is rather amusing to watch the actions of the female. The bird, of course, is endeavoring to lead the intruder away and will squat down in some slight hollow in the ground as if she were about to settle on the nest, and will keep this performance up for some distance should she be successful in her efforts, returning to the nest by a circuitous route. I have only seen one bird feign a broken wing and turn somersaults, thus displaying the beautiful plumage of this species. The Killdeer raises at least two broods in a season.

W. J. BROWN.

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## BIRD NOTES.

BY FRANK C. HENNESSEY, B.A.

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### RAPACITY OF THE BRONZED GRACKLE. (*Q. q. aeneus*.)

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At Albion, Michigan, on May 25, 1916, and also on the 29th of the same month, I observed an action which, so far as I know, has not been attributed to the bronzed grackle.



While passing down a street of the suburbs of Albion, I noticed an English sparrow feeding in the dusty road. As I came within forty feet of it, a grackle, seemingly without provocation, swooped down from a nearby tree and fell upon this unsuspecting bird. With a succession of rapid blows the grackle killed the sparrow outright. Before I could prevent it, a friend who was with me ran out to drive off the grackle. The grackle was a male. On examining the bill and feathers of the dead sparrow, I found that this bird was not young, in fact, I am certain that it was mature. On plucking the sparrow I found that the neck and base of the skull were badly bruised. The injury seemed to indicate that it had been killed by sheer impact of blows.

On the other occasion my attention was caught by a great clamoring of English sparrows. A grackle in their midst was being pursued, and finally floundered into some nearby trees. A mature, dead sparrow was left behind on the road.

On both occasions, unfortunately, I was prevented from witnessing what the grackle would have done with its victim if left undisturbed. This, of course, deprives one of determining the significance of the action in question. My friends at Albion told me of witnessing two other instances of similar action by "blackbirds."

#### RESTRICTED BREEDING COMMUNITIES OF THE HENSLOW'S SPARROW.

From May 25 to June 2, 1915, at Barbee Lake, Kosciusko County, Indiana, and from June 2 to June 11, 1916, at Albion, Michigan, I had an opportunity of studying the Henslow's sparrow.

On both occasions the sparrows occurred in low, wet meadows. The interesting point to me is that although there were many spots identically the same as those frequented by the sparrows, the birds occurred at one spot only in both of the regions studied.

At Barbee Lake, Indiana, the birds were found only over an area of about one-quarter of a mile square, at the south end of the Lake. Here there were about twenty birds, and the conditions of the cloaca and the egg stages in the oviduct of the female specimens collected showed that they were on their breeding ground. The females were always in greater evidence than the males, and most of the birds collected were of this sex.

At Albion, Michigan, the birds were found only over an area of about one-half a mile square. I explored extensively the country about Albion to within a radius of seven miles of the town, and although this region abounded with suitable localities for the breeding of Henslow's sparrow, I found them only at one spot east of the town. I estimated that here there must have been from forty to sixty birds.

The question arises, do these observations tend to show that the species group during the breeding period?





Hennessey, F. C. 1916. "Rapacity of the Bronzed Grackle." *The Ottawa naturalist* 30(9), 114–115.

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