

# EL PASO BIRD STUDY CLUB

## THE ROADRUNNER

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LENA MCBEE, CHAIRMAN

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IN MEMORIAM

MILLER

With the passing in January of Thomas D. Miller of St. Louis, grandfather of the late Tom Miller Kirksey, the club lost a friend and benefactor. When in El Paso, the stately, gray gentleman attended our meetings. At his heart's core was the Tom M. Kirksey Memorial.

RAWLINGS

Another valuable member of the club, Mrs. J. A. Rawlings, was taken by death last June in Philadelphia. When she was here in April, she spoke of her birds at the Rawlings Cottage in Mountain Park. She had resided in El Paso for forty-five years, and will be keenly missed.

RECENT MEETINGS

The club met May 14th at the El Paso Centennial Museum, at which time a colored film from the National Audubon Society was shown. An introductory talk about the coming Audubon Tours was given by Mrs. Wilmarth.

On July 24th, the committee for promoting the Audubon Tours met at the home of Mary Belle Keefer.

The October meeting of the club (October 8th) was addressed by Dr. I. M. Epstein, our first chairman. He spoke on Bird Study as a Hobby, recounting some of his field trips overseas. Motion pictures were shown by Mr. Wimberly.

THE NOVEMBER MEETING

On November 13th, the first attraction of the Audubon Tours will be offered at the Austin High School Junior Auditorium at 7:30 P.M. "Bird Magic in Mexico" by Olin S. Pettingill, Jr., has been chosen as opening number of the series of five, and because it comes from across the border, it should delight El Paso. Further facts about the Audubon Screen Tours appear below.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

The El Paso Bird Study Club and the Public Schools of El Paso take pleasure in presenting to nature lovers in the city the famous Audubon Tours in the very first season that they have been booked for the Southwest.

The following program is announced for the season of 1946-47: November 13, "Bird Magic in Mexico", Olin S. Pettingill, Jr.; Jan. 10, "Music of the Out-of-Doors", Bert Harwell; February 4, "Midnight Movies in Animal Land", Howard Cleaves; March 10, "South along the Suwannee", Allen D. Cruickshank; April 15, "Arizona Adventure", Karl H. Maslowsky.

All lectures will be held in the Junior High Auditorium of Austin High School at 7:30 P.M.

Tickets will be sold from October 26th through November 2nd at Don Thompson's and at the Five Points' Gunning and Casteel Drug Store. Club members will sell tickets at a special booth in the Popular Dry Goods Company on the Saturdays of October 26th and November 2nd. Season tickets for adults will be sold at \$1.50; for children at \$ .76.

Give this fine project your most enthusiastic support, that its success for the coming season may be assured and that it may become an annual affair.

## NEWS OF FOLKS

Col. George Burrows has been separated from the Army and is now with his parents in New Hampshire. The third of his articles in the series, "Bird Walks in New Guinea", has been promised.

Mr. and Mrs. George McClelland Bradt are spending the winter in Parral, Mexico. In this bulletin will be found a list of nests photographed by them this summer, with nesting detail.

Captain and Mrs. Alfred E. Eynon are residing in New Jersey following his separation from the Army. While he was on terminal leave, they had a month's vacation at Grand Isle, Vermont.

In Arizona, Mrs. Wright made some interesting observations on the ways of nestling shrikes. She was one of two bird-clubbers who visited a ranch in the Gila River near Silver City last spring, and saw bridled titmice.

Private Short and three other members of the Bird Study Club spent four days at Kingston, in the Mimbres Range, studying birds. Nests of Grace's warbler and the hepatic tanager were observed there. In the Black Mountains the party saw red-faced warblers, our first sight of them for four years.

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### SPRING IN MEMORIAL PARK Mary Belle Keefer

An unusually late, cool spring made the migration through Memorial Park rather meager and disappointing. This little park of forty-two acres in the residence district of El Paso, with a large permanent population of English sparrows and house finches, has always been interesting to watch in spring and fall. Although there were two severe sandstorms in March, on the whole there was less wind than usual this spring, and pleasantly cool weather persisted through April and into May.

The earliest arrivals were Audubon's warblers, which began coming early in March and continued in increasing numbers until the middle of April, dwindling again throughout the period of observation. This period was from March 8th to May 16th inclusive.

The pileolated, our next commonest migrant warbler, was seen first on April 4th by George Burrows and became more numerous on into May. The earliest arrivals were males, followed later by females. The earliest Audubon's warblers were immatures, presumably males not yet attired in spring plumage; but as April advanced the mature plumage was more in evidence. On May 16th I heard an Audubon's singing, a song weaker and thinner and much less pleasing than that of the orange-crowned I had heard on May 13th. Few in number and kind were the other warblers seen—one yellow on May 29th; one MacGillivray's on May 1st and another on May 13th; and the orange-crowned mentioned.

The first hummingbirds seen were five black-chinned on April 4th, and one or more were seen on every trip thereafter. We saw the nest of one in a cottonwood south of the stone bridge on May 1st; and on May 15th, the female was noted on the nest. On the same day two young were seen in a nest on Grant Avenue nearby.

Few flycatchers were seen and few vireos. A western wood pewee on May 7th, a western flycatcher on May 9th, and a small empidonax on both May 1st and May 16th make up the list of the former. One plumbeous vireo, seen on May 1st, constitutes the sole vireo record.

The ruby-crowned kinglets became more numerous from March 19th to the end of the month. Scattered records remain to be mentioned. They include a male western tanager on April 23rd, and one on May 1st; one cedar waxwing on May 1st; one black-headed grosbeak on May 9th. Others of the sparrow tribe seen were a song sparrow, a few chipping and a good many Gambel's sparrows. After the winter contingent had left, these sparrows continued to come in small groups of four or five and were heard through April.

Of winter residents in the park that stayed well into spring, the most interesting were small flocks of red-breasted nuthatches, last seen on April 14th; a few robins, seen and heard singing until May 1st; several gray titmice that were not seen after March 22nd; and a Townsend's solitaire, last observed on April 14th. A pair of <sup>short</sup>-shinned hawks, which we also associate with the thinness of the bird population this season, was last seen on March 22nd.

RECORDS OF EGGS COLLECTED IN 1946

Major General G. Ralph Meyer

(Note: Species or subspecies marked with the asterisk were new to my collection of eggs.)

- March 25 White-rumped Shrike.\* Nest with six fresh eggs in small bush along edge of arroyo north of Ft. Bliss.  
 Roadrunner.\* Nest with five eggs in varying stages of incubation. Nest in "buckbrush" along edge of same arroyo as preceding species. This nest was visited again the next day and there were but four eggs which were taken.  
 Crissal Thrasher.\* Two newly hatched young in a nest in a thicket less than 25 yards from the roadrunner's nest. The next day this nest contained two young and a fresh egg.
- March 26 Crissal Thrasher. Two newly hatched young in a nest in a mass of vines on the edge of an arroyo north of Ft. Bliss. Incubation started.  
 Western Horned Owl. Two eggs in a nest in the fork of a large yucca nine feet above the ground. This nest was about 100 yards from a road across the desert near the Dona Anna Target Range. The incubating bird on the nest was visible from the road. Incubation had started.
- March 27 Western Horned Owl. Three eggs in a shallow depression in the ground in a dilapidated pump house near Oro Grande. Embryos were formed. Some several days later I returned to this site and found the bird incubating two eggs on the ground under the floor of a nearby vacant house.  
 Crissal Thrasher. Three eggs, two with formed embryos, one fresh. Nest in "buckbrush" near Oro Grande.
- March 28 House Finch. Five eggs with trace of embryo. Nest in vines on the house I lived in at Ft. Bliss.
- April 8 Arizona Verdin. Four fresh eggs. Nest in small brushy tree in arroyo north of Ft. Bliss.
- April 11 Arizona Verdin. Five eggs with trace of incubation in similar location.  
 Cactus Wren.\* Four eggs with formed embryos. Nest in small tree along arroyo north of Ft. Bliss.
- April 14 Crissal Thrasher. Three eggs, two with formed embryos, one started. Nest in "buckbrush" near Oro Grande on open desert.  
 Roadrunner. Four eggs, incubation started. Nest in thicket along arroyo north of Oro Grande.  
 Western Red-tailed Hawk. Two sets each of two eggs in which incubation had started. One nest in a lone mesquite in the open desert near Oro Grande. The other nest was a large affair built on the platform of a windmill southeast of Oro Grande.
- April 21 English Sparrow. Five eggs far advanced in incubation. Nest was a barn swallow's nest under the bridge over the Rio Grande near the Country Club.  
 Desert Sparrow Hawk.\* Five eggs with formed embryo. Nest in a cavity in the trunk of a cottonwood stump along Montoya Road north of the Country Club. The incubating bird was captured on the nest and released. The cavity was about twelve inches deep with entrance six feet above the ground.
- May 11 Great-tailed Grackle. Two sets of three eggs and one of four well advanced in incubation were taken in a cat-tail marsh on the east side of the river opposite La Tuna. In one place there were seven nests in a radius of ten feet.  
 Nevada Redwing.\* Many of these were in the same marsh. Eggs varied from fresh to well advanced in incubation. Usual number was four.  
 American Coot. Set of six eggs, two with well formed young and the others infertile. This was the only coot nest found in this marsh, though there were many of the birds.  
 Florida Gallinule.\* One set of seven eggs was found in this marsh but was not taken.  
 Least Bittern. One nest with three eggs in this same marsh. Apparently this nest had been abandoned.
- May 17 Florida Gallinule. Two sets, one of eight and one of ten were taken in the small marsh just south of Canutillo along Route 80. Embryos were formed in both sets.

- May 20 Least Bittern. A set of three eggs with a trace of incubation was taken in the Canutillo marsh.
- May 23 Mexican Cliff Swallow.\* Two sets, one of four and one of three eggs were taken from cliffs at Hueco Tanks. Incubation well advanced.
- May 24 Black-necked Stilt.\* Four eggs in which embryos were formed. Nest, a slight depression in the ground on very low island in marsh near Vinton.  
Pied-billed Grebe. Found a nest with two eggs which were nearly ready to hatch. I believe other eggs had hatched and the young were gone. While I watched the nest through field glasses the parent bird returned and covered the two eggs with debris. Eggs were not taken.
- May 26 Ash-throated Flycatcher.\* Two sets of four eggs each were taken near Newman. One nest was in a cavity in an old adobe wall, the other in a cavity in a telephone pole. The first set had well formed embryos, in the second the incubation had started. On this same day I found several nests of the western kingbird with newly hatched young, one nest of cactus woodpecker with well grown young, as well as several ash-throated flycatcher nests with young.
- June 5 White-necked Raven.\* Five eggs, incubation started. Nest, a bulky affair on the platform of the airways beacon along the Carlsbad Highway about twenty miles east of El Paso.
- June 6 Black-necked Stilt. Another set of four eggs from a low muddy island in the marsh near Vinton. I believe these eggs belonged to the same pair of birds as the set collected on May 24.  
Western Kingbird.\* Two sets, one of five and one of four eggs; first set had formed embryos. The second had a trace. Nests were between the crossarm braces on telephone poles along Highway 80 between Anthony and Berino.  
Western Mourning Dove.\* Two sets of two eggs each from a patch of open woods near levee on east side of the river above Vado. Incubation had started.
- June 14 Little Flycatcher. Three well incubated eggs from a nest in a small sapling at Randel's Pool.
- June 15 Cactus Wren. Four fresh eggs in a "buckbrush" on the edge of an arroyo north of Ft. Bliss.
- June 23 Western Mockingbird.\* Three well-incubated eggs from nest in low bush along levee north of Vado.
- June 26 Long-tailed Chat.\* Set of four fresh eggs and one cowbird's egg in patch of woods along levee near La Tuna.
- June 28 Black-chinned Hummingbird.\* Two fresh eggs from nest along edge of rather dense growth of small trees along levee near La Tuna.
- July 1 Rock Mountain Grosbeak.\* Set of three eggs, incubation started. Nest about 25 feet above ground in edge of a patch of trees along levee above Vado. Male bird was on the eggs and singing.
- July 4 Black-chinned Hummingbird. Two fresh eggs. Nest in patch of woods along levee north of Vado. I found more hummingbird's nests this year than in all the rest of my collecting. I took a total of three sets, all black-chinned but I found several more. In almost every case a last year's nest was somewhere nearby and in some cases a nest apparently of the year before last, too.  
Little Flycatcher. Abandoned nest with one flycatcher's egg and one cowbird's egg in the patch of woods along the levee north of Vado. This is the only place I found cowbird's eggs but I found them here in two long-tailed chats' nests and in two little fly-catchers' nests, both of the latter having been abandoned.
- July 10 Florida Gallinule. Set of six well-incubated eggs from a marsh between the levee and the river below Clint. This is a most unusual set because of its size. The average weight of eggs was 3 drams, 41 grains, as compared with 5 drams, 19 grains, for three other sets and the average measurements were 1.63 by 1.06 as compared with 1.80 by 1.20 for the three other sets taken. The Clint set is more nearly the size of the eggs of the purple gallinule, which is not known to nest in this vicinity. The only gallinule seen in the vicinity was the Florida; so I am inclined to believe that these are unusually small eggs of that species.

BIRD DATES - 1946  
George McClelland Bradt

(Note: Hy 11 includes area north of Casner range and west to Newman. Each entry represents a different nest.)

1. Shrike: 5 eggs 3/28 Hy 11  
6 eggs 4/7 near Fabens  
6 well-feathered young 5/8 near Strauss  
6 eggs 6/7 Hueco Tank area
2. Roadrunner: 5 eggs 4/5 Hy 11 (Gen. Meyer's)  
5 eggs 4/22 Hy 11  
4 feathered young and 1 egg 5/3 near Sanctuary
3. Crissal Thrasher: 4 eggs 5/3 Hy 11
4. Verdin: several eggs 4/22 Hy 11
5. Ash-throated Flycatcher: 5 young with pinfeathers 4/21 Aden Volcano  
4 naked young 5/27 Hy 11  
several black babies 6/1 near Noria  
5 eggs in pipe 6/21 Hy 11
6. Say's Phoebe: 4 eggs in adobe wall 4/7 Fabens
7. Rock Wren: young in nest in Aden Volcano 4/27
8. Cactus Woodpecker: 2 newly hatched young 5/4 Noria  
2 partially feathered young and 1 egg 5/26 Noria
9. Scott Oriole: 4 babies 5/30 Noria  
4 eggs 5/27 Hy 11  
4 babies 6/1 Hy 11
10. Mockingbird: 4 eggs 5/26 Noria  
3 eggs 6/1 Noria  
4 black babies 6/3 Hy 11  
4 eggs 6/3 Hy 11  
2 eggs 6/24 Jornada Exp. Sta.
11. Linnet: eggs 5/19 Noria  
well-feathered young 5/27 Noria
12. Swainson's Hawk: 3 eggs (looked fresh) 5/27 Hy 11
13. Arkansas Kingbird: nest being built beyond Country Club 5/27  
4 young 5/26 Hy 11
14. Bullock's Oriole: 2 young (naked) and 1 egg 6/3 Hy 11
15. Cactus Wren: 4 young 6/1 Strauss road  
eggs 5/27 Hy 11
16. Burrowing Owl: 4 partially feathered young 6/4 Ysleta Cut-off  
2 well-feathered young 6/5 Ysleta Cut-off
17. Raven: 5 naked babies 6/10 Hy 11  
4 eggs 6/24 Jornada Exp. Sta.  
3 young, naked, 6/24 Jornada Exp. Sta.
18. Dove: 1 egg 6/10 Hy 11
19. Coot: 2 new babies and 1 egg 7/19 Ascarate
20. Redwing Blackbird: 3 one-half grown young 7/19 Ascarate  
3 eggs 7/19 Ascarate

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## THE MOCKINGBIRD

Pedro and his sister, Rosita, lay under the grape arbor, looking at the bits of blue sky between the leaves. Pedro's bare toes dug into the soft, cool earth.

"What I like best about the vacation is that I do not have to wear shoes," he said.

"And we do not have to do one thing all day long!" added Rosita.

"Nor look at one single book!"

"Oh, but Miss Day said I should read one book each week, and you should, too. Tomorrow I shall get a book to read. What shall we do today?"

"I do not want to do one little thing. I want to lie here and listen to the birds and bees and watch the grasshoppers and bugs."

A yellow and black butterfly fluttered by. A bee and a wasp came for a drink where the water dripped from the pipe. A little green worm started crawling across the big green leaf of a sunflower.

An English sparrow flew down from the vines on the porch and caught it in her beak. The children lay quite still. A house finch came for a drink. Pedro drew a bit of pencil and a paper from his pocket. "That is two birds already, and this is the first morning of the vacation," he whispered.

"Why are you writing their names?" Rosita wanted to know.

"Miss Smith is going to buy the Bird Club a new bird book if we see as many as thirty birds this vacation. I am going to try to get that many all by myself."

"But you do not know the names of that many birds!"

"I can see what they look like and how big they are, and then look for the names in a book at the library."

"Oh! Oh! I thought you did not want to read a book!" laughed the little girl, shaking her black curls.

"But bird books are fun. They are not work at all." Quickly he jumped to his feet. "Come on, Rosita. Let us walk down the path by the canal and look for birds."

Soon they came to a grove of trees. They sat down in the shade, as the sun was getting very warm. A bird began to sing nearby. Pedro looked for the singer, but it was Rosita's sharp eyes that spied it first.

"It is a house finch. See, on the telephone pole!" she said.

"It sings like a finch, but this bird is gray and white. It is bigger than a sparrow or house finch."

"I know! It is a canary. Listen to the canary song."

"Silly girl! A canary is yellow and lives in a cage. But now listen! It is whistling like a red-wing. I think he is trying to mock the other birds," said Pedro.

"Then let us name him Mr. Mocker," Rosita said.

The gray bird stopped his song, which seemed to change very often, and jumped four or five feet into the air. He dropped back to the post and started singing again.

"I never saw a bird do that before," said Pedro. "I must find out the name of your Mr. Mocker. Let me see. He is about as big as a robin. He is all gray above and almost white below."

"He has a long bill," Rosita noticed.

"And a long tail, too. The outer feathers of the tail are white."

Mr. Mocker jumped up into the air again. "Oh, and he has white wing patches," Pedro added.

Six more times the bird jumped into the air. Each time he returned to the telephone pole and continued his song. Then he flew away to some trees. The children started to follow.

"I am sure he has a nest in those trees. He was so very happy," said Pedro. "If only we could find it and take one little peek at the eggs!"

As Pedro was climbing the third tree, his cap was pushed off by a limb. It fell on a tall hedge. Rosita ran to pick it up. "Oh, Pedro, come!" she cried. "Your cap found the nest! Can you see in it from the limb?"

"Part the leaves a little more," he answered. "Yes, I can see now. The nest is made of grass and twigs. It has four bluish green eggs. They have many brown spots on them. Come, we must go away so we will not worry the mother when she returns."

Pedro jumped to the ground, and the children started for home. The sun was high overhead and Mother would have lunch ready.

As they ate they told Mother all about "Mr. Mocker". Mrs. del Rio laughed. He really is a mockingbird, Little Ones," she said. "He sings and sings many, many songs all the summer long. On nights when the moon is bright, he sings me to sleep."

"Two old friends and one new one," said Pedro as he wrote "mockingbird" in his bird list.

Teachers' note: Western Mockingbird  
length, 10-11 in.  
slender, longtailed  
gray above, white below  
large white wing patches  
white outer-tail feathers

A PICTURE STORY

The Mockingbird has a gray head and neck. Its body is white.

Its tail is long and its eye is yellow. It has white wing patches and the outer feathers of its tail are white. It is about the size of our friend the sparrow but not so fat. Mrs. Mockingbird builds her nest in a bush or tree. She lays four to five bluish-green eggs with brown spots. Mr. Mockingbird loves to sing from the top of a tree to the top of another tree. Often when the moon is bright, he fills the night with his beautiful song.



## THE SHRIKE

The big yellow sun peeped over the edge of the desert. How cool the morning breeze was! Carlos looked over the flat, level land and remembered how hot the afternoon before had been.

Carlos knew that June is always a very hot month in the Arizona desert. But he had forgotten how fresh and clean the early mornings feel.

"Hurry up, Sleepyhead," he called to his younger brother. "Come out and say 'Good Morning' to the desert. Come out and listen to the bird songs."

Tommy Lamar opened the door and grinned at his tall brother. "Good morning, Arizona. Good morning, Carlos." A Cocker Spaniel ran around the corner of the house and jumped upon the boys.

"Hold Sandy and listen," said Carlos. A red-wing whistled near the barn. A mockingbird filled the air with song. From a fence post a meadowlark, his breast as yellow as the rising sun, sang his happy notes.

Another bird flew into a tree at the edge of the lawn. In its bill was a large green grasshopper.

"There goes breakfast for the baby mockingbirds," said Tommy.

"What makes you think that was a mockingbird?" asked Carlos.

"It was gray and black with white under-parts. The wings and tail were black. It had white patches in its wings and a white edge on its tail. It was the size of a robin. And look, there is Mr. Mocker singing on the telephone pole."

"That is a good guess, Tommy. You know how to use your eyes. But there was something you did not see. Come over to the tree and I think I can show you."

The little dog trotted ahead, his ears almost touching the grass. Two birds dropped from the tree to the top wire of the fence. They began to hiss and scold. This was the beginning of an old game. One bird darted down in front of the dog's nose. As Sandy jumped for it, the other bird "dive-bombed", and nipped the hair on the tip of Sandy's funny little tail. How he leaped and barked! How the birds fluttered and scolded!

Sandy dropped on the grass to rest, his red tongue hanging out. One bird dropped to the grass. He seemed to say, "Come on and play, old boy. Come on and catch me."

"Now you can see, Tommy," said Carlos. "See that black mask over the bird's eyes? This bird is a shrike. Some people call him a Butcher Bird. That is because because he sometimes eats smaller birds. He has one funny habit. He hangs his grasshoppers and little birds and mice on the thorns of bushes."

"Just as a butcher hangs meat on big hooks, isn't it?" Tommy added.

The shrike spread its wings and flew back to the tree. "Oh, I saw something else," said Tommy. "This bird has a white patch on its back, just where the black tail begins. But it has a white edge on its tail, like the mockingbird."

"Can you tell the shrike from the mockingbird now?" asked Carlos.

"Yes, I will always remember that black mask and white patch where the tail begins," said Tommy.

## THE QUARREL

"Listen to that noise in the tree," called Tommy as the boys returned to the yard after breakfast. "Something is after the birds in the second tree."

Both boys ran. As they reached the tree, two baby shrikes came tumbling to the grass. They were clawing and pecking at each other.

"I guess one got the grasshopper the other wanted," laughed Carlos. "Just look at them fight!"

Sandy ran round and round the babies. The father and mother bird darted back and forth. One baby got loose and fluttered along the grass. "Isn't he cute?" he asked. "He is a bandit, like his father. See, he has the black mask, too." Tommy put him in the hedge.

"Where is the other baby?" asked Carlos. "Oh, Sandy has him."

Sandy was lying on the grass. He wiggled with joy. In the circle of his paws was the other baby shrike. It was lying on its back, fighting the air with beak and claws.

"Isn't Sandy having fun?" Tommy laughed, as the boys watched. "Every time the bird stops hitting, Sandy touches it with his nose to make it start again."

Just then Sandy's long ear got too close to the little claws, and they caught in the long hair. Sandy began to wiggle backward. His big brown eyes asked for help.

"Come here, Baby," said Carlos. Carefully the boy picked up the angry little shrike and put it in the hedge beside its brother.

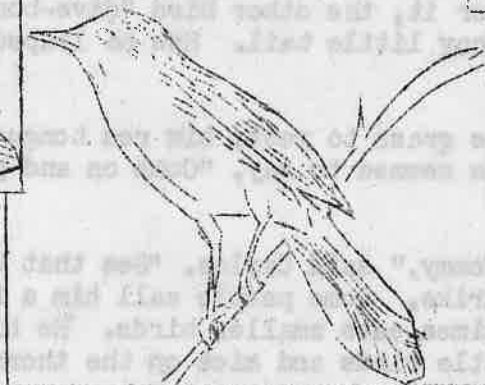
Teachers' note:

White-rumped Shrike  
 length, 8 to 10.in  
 color, upper parts light slate gray  
 upper tail coverts, white  
 wings and tail, black  
 white wing patch  
 wide eye streak, black (a mask)  
 under-parts, white

Draw a circle around the right name.



Sparrow  
 Shrike  
 House Finch  
 Red-Wing



Meadowlark  
 Robin  
 Mockingbird  
 Junco



Sparrow  
 Yellow-Headed Blackbird  
 Red-Wing Blackbird  
 Mockingbird



Meadowlark  
 Flicker  
 Junco  
 Shrike



Shrike  
 Sparrow  
 House Finch  
 Flicker

These are all about robin-sized birds.  
 All of them are our friends because they eat insects.  
 Two have beautiful songs.  
 All of them nest here.  
 All of them may be seen here all the year around.