

THIS WEEK ON THE LLANO ESTACADO

March 29 to April 2, 2010



Killdeer often visit schoolyards. Although they are sandpipers (a group of birds usually associated with water), they run about on bare soil and short grass searching for insects.

Killdeer place their eggs on the bare ground. The eggs are white, with many speckled dark spots, and are almost invisible. When a predator comes near the mother bird she will flutter away pretending she has a broken wing.

Their name comes from their call “kill-dee, kill-dee.” When you hear that sound look for them — they will be flying over! Sometimes they will make the call when they are on the ground, and when they do, they are often bobbing up and down — almost bouncing. They are rarely in groups of more than three, unlike many other species of sandpipers who flock together in much bigger groups. Killdeer live on the Llano Estacado year around.

TEACHER AND STUDENT CHALLENGE:

When you see killdeer on the school ground, please email us at the Sibley Center (bwilliams@sibleynaturecenter.org). Tell us what the birds were doing. If you see them feeding on the ground, try to discover what they were feeding upon. If you notice any interactions with other birds, please tell us that, too.