

# Killdeer

*Charadrius vociferus*

A shorebird you can see without going to the beach, Killdeer are graceful plovers common to lawns, golf courses, athletic fields, and parking lots. These tawny birds run across the ground in spurts, stopping with a jolt every so often to check their progress, or to see if they've startled up any insect prey. Their voice, a far-carrying, excited kill-deer, is a common sound even after dark, often given in flight as the bird circles overhead on slender wings.

## Keys to Identification

### Size and Shape

Killdeer have the characteristic large, round head, large eye, and short bill of all plovers. They are especially slender and lanky, with a long, pointed tail and long wings.

### Color Pattern

Brownish-tan on top and white below. The white chest is barred with two black bands, and the brown face is marked with black and white patches. The bright orange-buff rump is conspicuous in flight

### Behavior

Killdeer spend their time walking along the ground or running ahead a few steps, stopping to look around, and running on again. When disturbed they break into flight and circle overhead, calling repeatedly. Their flight is rapid, with stiff, intermittent wingbeats

### Habitat

Look for Killdeer on open ground with low vegetation (or no vegetation at all), including lawns, golf courses, driveways, parking lots, and gravel-covered roofs, as well as pastures, fields, sandbars and mudflats. This species is one of the least water-associated of all shorebirds.



## Measurements

### Both Sexes

- Length - 7.9 - 11.0 inches
- Wingspan - 18.1 - 18.9 inches
- Weight - 2.6 - 4.5 ounces