

Red-winged Blackbird:

Agelaius phoeniceus



Male

The Red-winged Blackbird generally prefers wetlands of both freshwater and saltwater marshes, particularly if cattail is present. It is also found in dry upland areas of meadows and prairies. The Red-winged Blackbird's range is from southern Alaska to the Yucatan peninsula and from the west coast to the east coast of North America. These birds migrate in winter from the northern reaches of their range to the southern United States and Central America.

The Red-winged Blackbird will attack much larger birds and even humans while defending its nesting territory during breeding season. This omnivorous blackbird feeds primarily on plant materials, but a smaller portion of its diet includes insects and other small animals. Constructed entirely by the female, the Red-winged Blackbird builds its nest in cattails, rushes, grasses and the like. They are polygamous and males will defend up to ten different females. Females will mate with males other than their social mate and often lay clutches (a hatch of eggs) of mixed paternity, with two or three clutches per season. Their rich, musical voices are readily identifiable and sound like, "O-ka-LEEEE."



Female



Flock of Red-winged Blackbirds