

Loggerhead Shrike

Lanius ludovicianus

A small gray, black, and white bird of open areas, the Loggerhead Shrike hardly appears to be a predator. But it uses its hooked beak to kill insects, lizards, mice, and birds, and then impales them on thorns to hold them while it rips them apart.

Keys to Identification

Adult Description

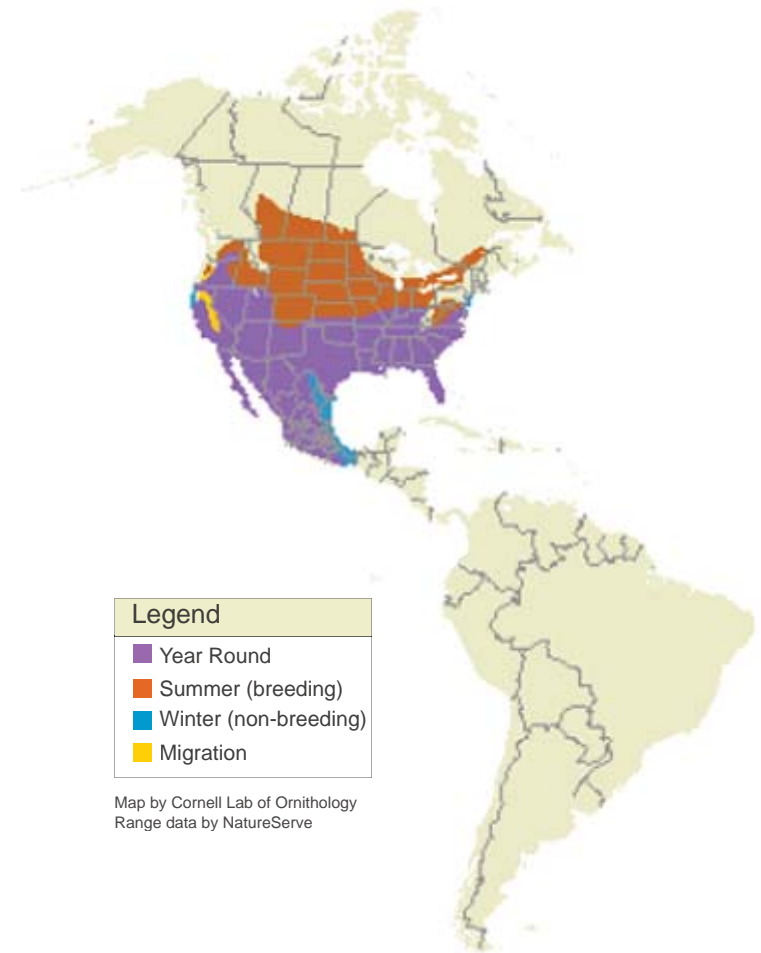
- Medium-sized songbird.
- White throat and whitish chest.
- Black Mask.
- Large head.
- Medium-long tail.
- Stout, black bill, with a hook at the end.
- Wings black with a white patch.
- Tail black with white outer feathers.

Immature Description

Juvenile similar to adult, but duller gray and with faint bars on chest and back.

Cool Facts

- The Loggerhead Shrike is a predator, but it does not have the strong feet and talons of a raptor. It does have a strongly hooked bill for gripping flesh, and a strong notch or “tooth” near the bill tip that helps sever the spinal cord of its prey. It uses thorns and barbed wire to hold large prey while it rips it up, and may wedge prey into a fork in a branch for the same purpose.



Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 7.9 - 9.1 inches
- Wingspan - 11 - 12.6 inches
- Weight - 1.2 - 1.8 ounces