



The Cowbird is a Blackbird with a brown head and a bill that looks like a cone. Cowbirds feed in large flocks on fields and meadows, chattering away: click-tsi-ee click-tsi-ee. They eat mostly grasshoppers, also beetles, caterpillars, spiders, and some weed seeds.

The female Cowbird does not build its own nest. Instead it lays its four to five eggs in the nests of other birds. No other bird in the United States and Canada does this. Robins and Catbirds are wise to the Cowbird's tricks. They seem to recognize the bluish-white, speckled eggs as those of a stranger and push them out of their nests. But other birds, like the Warblers and Vireos, sit on Cowbird eggs, as though they were their own. In about ten days-earlier than most other birds' eggs hatch-the Cowbird fledglings break through the shell. They eat so much that their foster parents are kept busy feeding them and often neglect their own young. Soon after leaving the nest the young Cowbirds join flocks of other Cowbirds.