



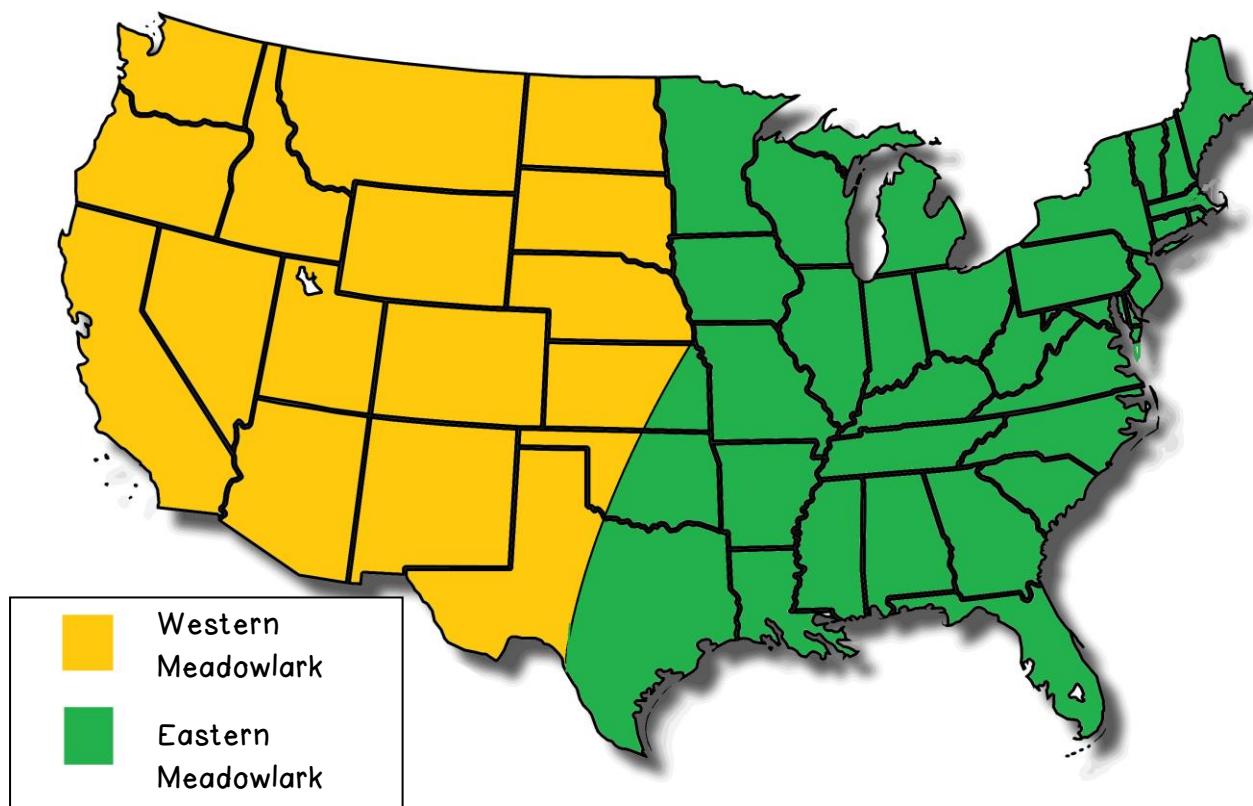
Let's
Learn
About

Meadowlarks



There are two types of meadowlark: Eastern and Western. The Eastern Meadowlark spends its year in the eastern half of the contiguous (touching) United States from eastern Texas up through Massachusetts. It flies farther north, into Michigan, Wisconsin, and New York during the summer.

The Western Meadowlark lives in the western half of the U.S., from Oklahoma and Kansas to the coast. Both are members of the blackbird family, which also includes cowbirds and orioles, but there are other differences between the eastern and western birds besides where they live.



Eastern Meadowlarks live in grasslands and on farms. They stalk through the grasses of meadows, probing for insects with their long, sharp bills. They use their bills by pushing them into the ground. They then open their jaws to disturb the soil and expose the insects within it. The dappled brown and black camouflage of their upper bodies hides them from predators amid the grasses and dirt of their hunting area. Hunting and nesting territories include prairies, hayfields, crop fields, and airports—anywhere there is a large, grassy area.

Eastern meadowlarks eat mostly insects such as grasshoppers, caterpillars, crickets, and grubs. In winter when insects are scarce, they also eat weed seeds and wild fruits. They do not eat sprouting grains such as wheat.

Eastern meadowlarks like to perch on fence posts and telephone wires to sing their lovely, flute-like song. There you can see the bright yellow breast and stark black chevron (v-shape) below their throats. The males sing to attract mates and establish territory. There are more than 100 variations of the meadowlark's song. When the breeding season ends, they get quite,

sticking to the tall grasses and thick vegetation where they can hunt without being disturbed. They fly low to the ground in a sequence of short glides and rapid fluttering and will take flight if approached by a human.

Eastern Meadowlarks nest in depressions (shallow holes) on the ground surrounded by tall grasses. The female builds the nest by weaving meadow grasses, plant stems, and strips of bark. Sometimes she uses the grass to create a dome roof over the nest. She lays 3 to 5 eggs twice a year. They are white with brown markings.

Hatchlings grow to be 7 ½ to 10 inches tall and weight 3 to 5 ounces with a 14- to 16-inch wingspan.

Interestingly, the biggest difference between the Eastern Meadowlark and the Western Meadowlark is their voices. Although they are almost identical, the two birds very rarely cross-breed. In fact, in areas where their ranges overlap, the two types of meadowlark do not even share territory. Because their songs are so different, communication is impossible. Therefore, they fight over territory if an western meadowlark enters the territory of an eastern meadowlark or vice versa.

Western meadowlarks also forage on the ground alone, though in winter they can be found in small, loose flocks. They like the wide, open spaces of native grasslands and crop fields for hunting and can most often be found low to medium-height grasses rather than tall grass. They avoided woods or areas heavy with shrubs

Western meadowlarks eat grains and weed seeds as well as insects such as grasshoppers, beetles, crickets, cutworms, and ants. Using a feeding behavior called gaping, western meadowlarks insert their bills into soil or manure and pry it open to get at seeds and insects.

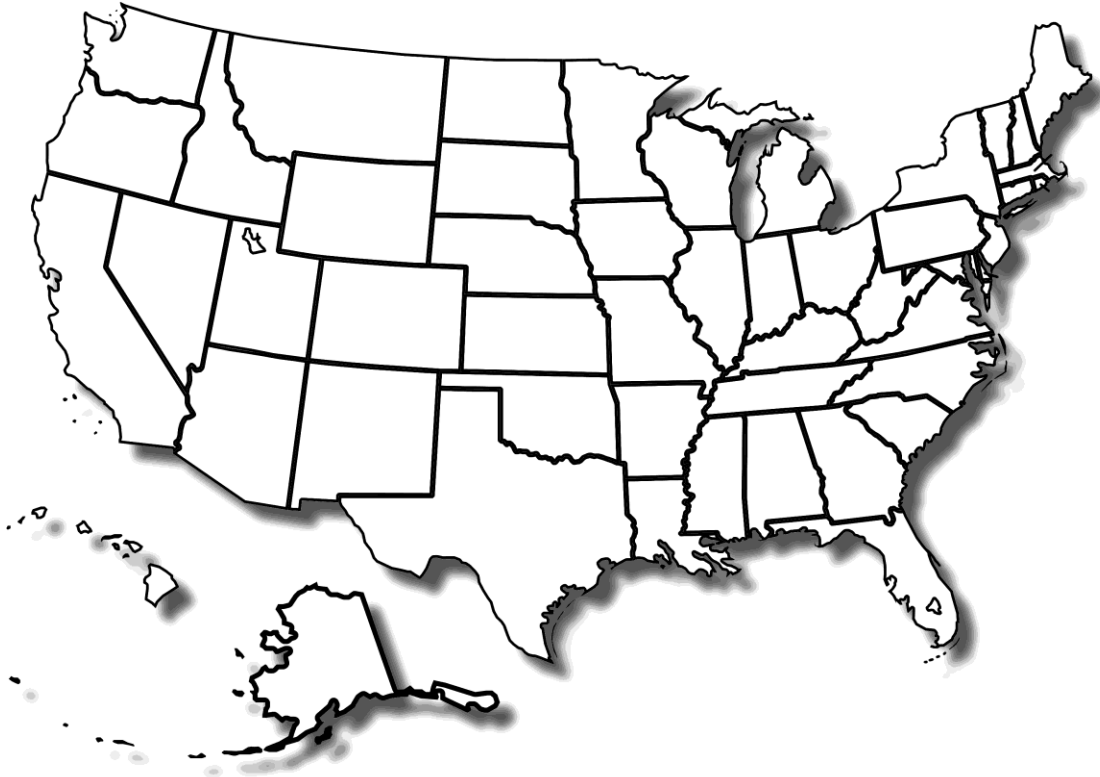
Females do all of the incubating (keeping the eggs warm) and most of the feeding of the young. The female creates a depression with her bill in a cup shape then lines the cup with dry grasses and pliable stems. She uses the vegetation around the cup to create a waterproof dome over the nest. She then lays 5 to 6 eggs once or twice a year. The eggs are white covered in brown, rust, and lavender spots.

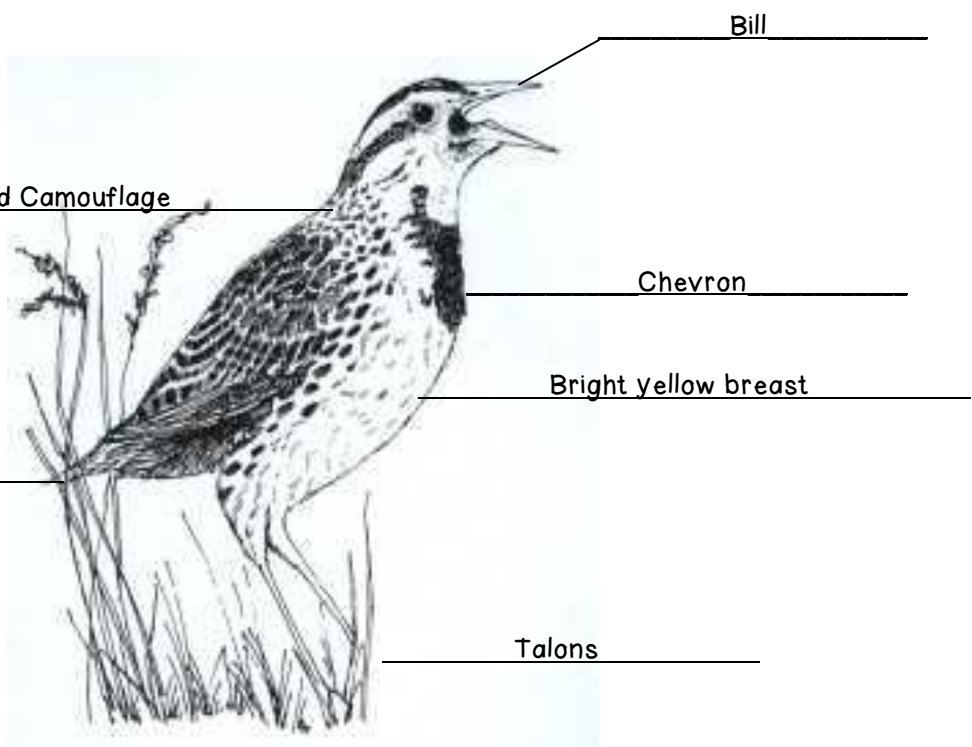
Though they fly low to the ground like the eastern bird, the western meadowlark's flight pattern is short, stiff wing beats followed by gliding. However, they are similar in size, growing to 6 to 10 inches tall and weighing 3-4 ounces with a 16-inch wingspan.



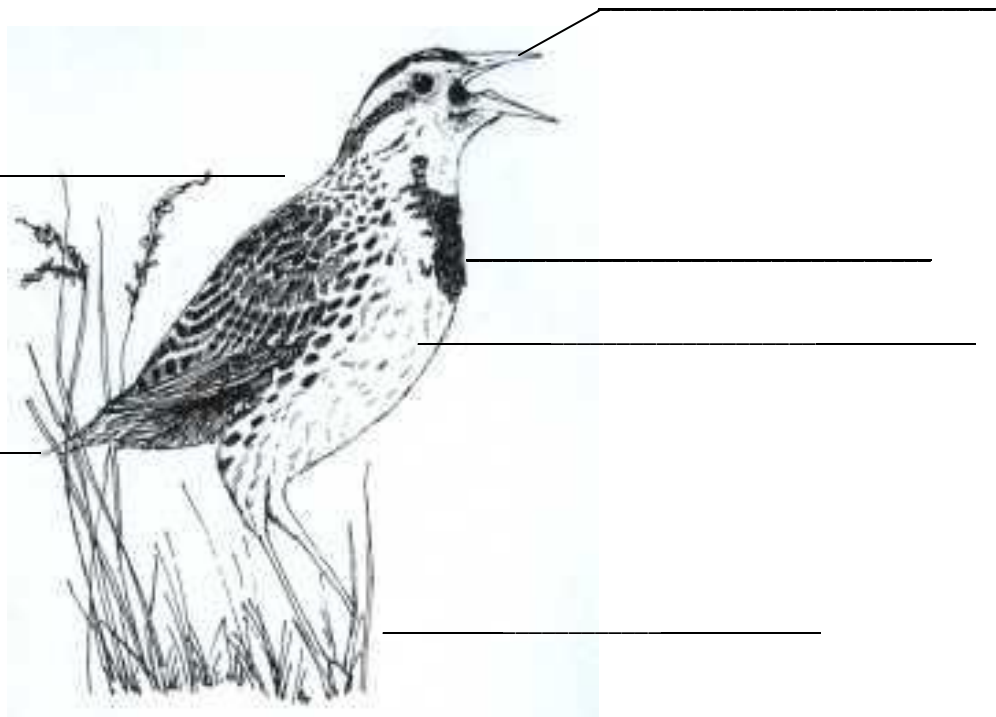
Color the territories

Use a green crayon to color in the range of the Eastern Meadowlark in the United States. Use a yellow crayon to color in the range of the Western Meadowlark.





Color and Label the Meadowlark



Meadowlark Word Search

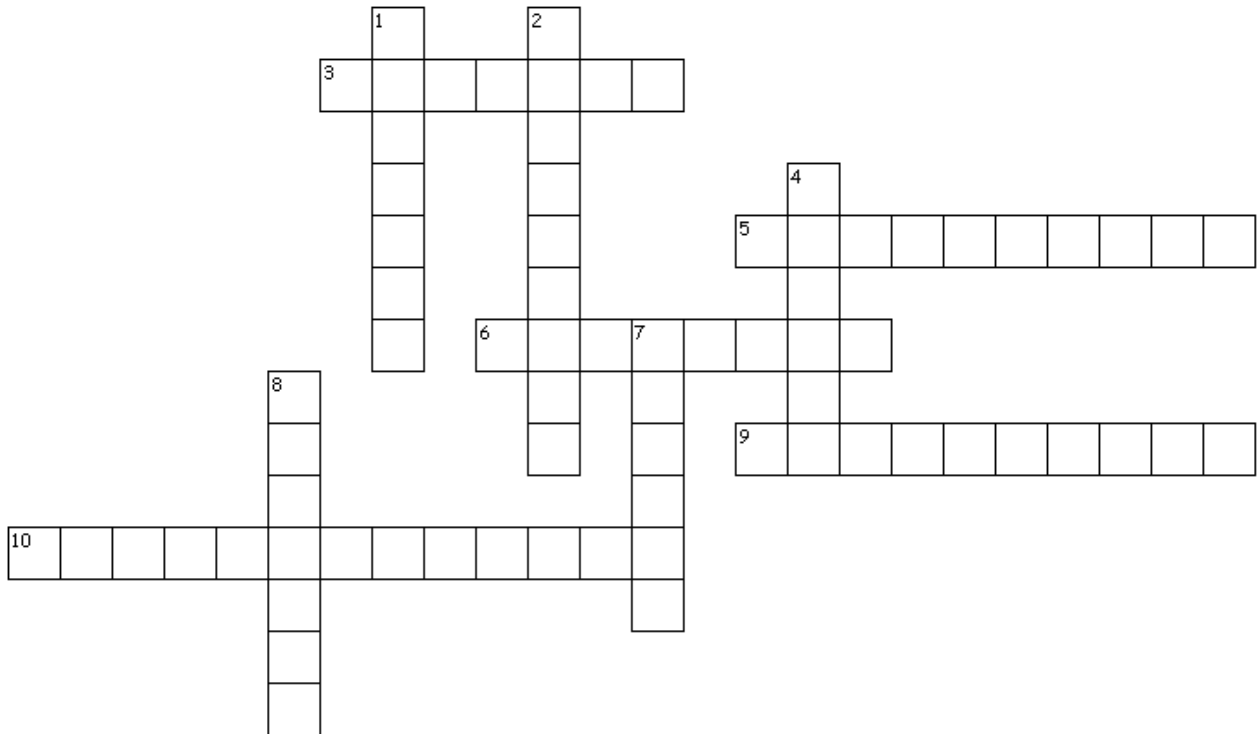
U I Q E S M W U L C Y N X N F
Y Z G J O R B P O D R O R A O
D B Z J O P X N J E O F V P R
Q R T Q N S T H T B S G T S A
D T I N O I S S E R P E D G G
J A Z B G J A N L E C U A N E
K Y P U K E B O Q C G P Z I N
G P O P S C D Y A H I D E W Z
Q U Q H L D A C T N U I M Z X
S S O H T E I L G P W I S F T
N X T F G O D J B T H G I L F
R C O Y T B O S O M Z Q J K H
R K A K L W O K D I C J O F B
U R V N X E E D I I M A F E T
E G X L V W E S T E R N F L T

BLACKBIRD
DEPRESSION
FORAGE
WINGSPAN

CONTIGUOUS
EASTERN
GAPING

DAPPLED
FLIGHT
WESTERN

Meadowlark Crossword



Across

3. brown and black spots that camouflage meadowlarks
5. touching
6. length of wings from tip to tip
9. shallow hole
10. the way in which a bird flies

Down

1. meadowlark that lives in the eastern half of the U.S.
2. family to which both meadowlarks belong
4. hunt or search
7. inserting the bill into the soil to pry it open
8. meadowlark that lives in the western half of the U.S.

Word Bank

eastern	western	contiguous
blackbird	dappled	depression
wingspan	forage	gaping
	flight pattern	

Thank you so much for downloading this Let's Learn About Meadowlarks printable! I truly appreciate your support and encouragement and hope this printable helps your child understand more about meadowlarks.

Like What You See Here?

Check out my low-cost novel studies available for purchase!

Lit Looking Glass Novel Studies

Click on the link below to go to my Lit Looking Glass Shop.



Need help picking the perfect novels for your homeschool?

Choosing the Perfect Fiction Books for Your Homeschool Year

Click on the link below to find out more.



Copyright © KT Brison 2017

Home educators and parents who have purchased this ebook may print the material and use it as they wish, but it is illegal to copy, sell, or reproduce it for financial gain or in a public forum without permission.

