

by J. Lawrence Smith

## BOB LINCOLN'S BIRD

While birding near a field in Canaan Valley with high grass, you may hear a gurgling and tinkling song as a bird flies up to perch on a fence post. Clad in striking black and white with a powder puff look to the back of its head, the Bobolink is a bird of mountain meadows in the high Alleghenies

The song seemed to say "Bob-o-Lincoln" to the imagination of persons who encountered it with the settlement of America. It is a bird of the Northeast and Canada with the southern limits of its nesting range in West Virginia.

The female lays four to seven white eggs blotched with brown or lavender in a grassy cup of a nest on the ground. Upon completion of nesting, Bobolinks gather in flocks and journey to southern South America for the winter months.



Even though a showy bird, patience is often needed when searching for the Bobolink. They often remain quiet and hidden in the grass leading a birder to think they are not present.

They nest widely in grassy fields and meadows in the higher mountain counties of the state. The southernmost place it has nested is near Grandview in Raleigh County.

A number of birds that nest in the mountains of West Virginia are more common to the North. One that enlivens grassland with its tinkling song and handsome dress is the Bobolink.