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Abstracts

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

ORIENTATION AND MICROCLIMATE OF HORNED LARK NESTS: THE IMPORTANCE OF SHADE

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Abstract. Across their range, Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) consistently construct their nests adjacent to and north of a conspicuous object such as a tuft of grass, shrub, or rock. We studied the relative importance of a northern nest orientation to nest microclimate in Horned Larks breeding in northeastern California. Nests showed a significant northern bias in orientation angle and were 49% shaded in the early afternoon, the hottest part of the day. Artificial nests of eastern, western, and southern orientations exhibited little to no shade during this time. A northern nest orientation also allowed nests to face prevailing winds during the day and avoid them in the evening. The Horned Larks' preference for a northern nest orientation offers multiple advantages for regulation of nest microclimate.

Key words: *Eremophila alpestris*, *Horned Lark*, *microclimate*, *nest entrance*, *nest orientation*, *shade*, *solar radiation*.