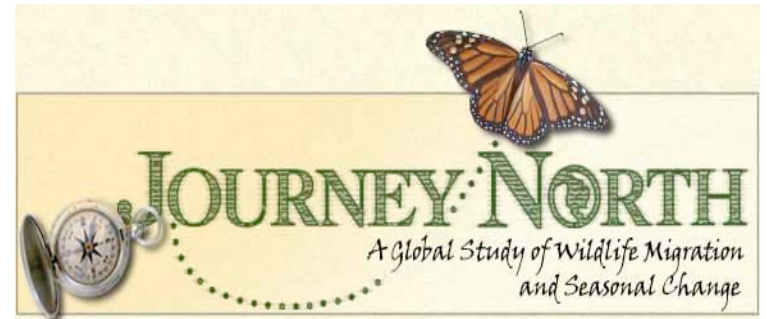




<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/>

© 2006 Journey North



Will a Robin Choose Your Neighborhood?

by Jane Duden



©Photo Laura Erickson

What Do Robins Look For?

Somewhere out there, a robin thinks *your* backyard is its home **territory**. A robin's territory is where mating and nesting takes place.

A male's first job in spring is to find a territory. He works hard to find the best land. He flies over neighborhoods or sits high in trees. He looks and listens. What do you think a robin wants in his territory? What *doesn't* he want?

A robin may battle other males for a good territory. When he wins, he stakes his claim. How? He sings his song, loud and clear. Now he is home!



©Photo Laura Erickson

Ladies Second

Male robins reach the summer **breeding grounds** before the females. They must have a territory before they find a mate. Females return about two weeks later than males. They often fight other females for the best males and best territories. Why?

Is this robin a male or a female? You can tell by the color. A male's head and tail feathers are dark black and bright orange. A female's colors look drab and dull next to a male's. Why do males have brighter feathers?



©Photo Wayne Kryduba

Nest Quest

What is this robin doing? If you said getting ready to make a nest, you're right!

Males and females both gather nest materials. The female builds the nest. She uses mud, grass, twigs, and other things. Will robins use yarn in their nests if you leave it out? You can observe to find out!

It takes the female 2-6 days to build the nest. The nest is not a robin home. It is only a nursery for babies.



©Photo Wayne Kryduba

Early Birds Catch Worms

Robins eat a lot of earthworms during the breeding season. Worms are easiest to find at night and early morning. Have you seen spring's first earthworms yet?

Most birds lay their eggs at sunrise. NOT robins! They are busy hunting for worms at sunrise. Robins lay their eggs mid-morning, after a good breakfast of worms.

Journey North wants to know when you hear your robin sing and when you see your first earthworms this spring. Report them on the Internet!



How Big is a Robin's Nest?



©Photos Julie Brophy

Robins often build their first springtime nest in an evergreen tree. Later, they will build nests in elm trees or maple trees.

Why do you think first nests are often in evergreens?

What Do You Think?

- Do the males sing more when the females arrive? It makes sense, but how would we know for sure?
- Do robins sing more at one time of day?
- What does the robin's song sound like?
- What do other robin sounds mean?
- Do robins come back to the same territory each spring?
- How many eggs does a robin lay?

You can find some answers by observing robins in your yard. You can come to the Internet and find more answers on Journey North!

Follow the Robins With Journey North

Put YOUR robins on the map with one click of the button on Journey North's Internet site. Report when you hear your first robin song this spring. That's when you know that YOUR robins are *really* home!