



OUR AMERICAN ROBIN

On the Watch
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It wasn't until this year that I was able to watch, from my balcony, and with the help of my birds library, figure out about the mating season of Robins. Although the first Robins started to be seen in March in the Golden Horseshoe area, it all began in April when two male Robins faced off on our lawn. Bird books say that some even have "tumbling fights". Finally, one backed off and flew away. The remaining one had established his nesting territory! If he did not already have a mate, his cheery voice calling "cheerily cheer up" soon had a female in sight. His voice would also be telling other male Robins that they were not welcome on his territory.

This pair - male, black head and bright orange breast; female, paler head and breast, members of the Thrush family - then began looking for a safe place to build their nest. No leaves out yet to hide a nest so they chose a young spruce tree - thick, strong branches - on our property. This, says the books, is the common choice for the first nest. They nest from April to early August. At the present time, now late June, they have just built a second nest in a maple tree just outside our dining room window. We have a front seat to watch!

Between April and now, the female had been incubating 3-4 blue eggs, for about twelve days while the male was on guard duty. Eggs hatch and parents feed; young leave the nest. It is interesting to see the adults run a few steps; pause with head tilted; drive their pointed, yellow bills into the ground and come up with a worm. Scientists ponder: do birds have exception hearing and/or can they feel the vibrations of a worm down under the ground? The answer is still up in the air.

The young Robins watch and imitate Dad trying their hand at getting food. Meanwhile, Mom may be on nest two, incubating another 3-4 eggs. They may have 3-4 broods per summer. When nesting season is over, nesting territory is not needed so Robins begin to gather in huge flocks. In September, October and even into November most will migrate south but some flocks stay for the winter. Our son, Mike says that in the woods behind Sheridan College in Oakville, there is such a flock. During the day, they disperse to find food. Later, they flock there for the night - safety in numbers. I hope he will take me there next winter.

Photo on the right: An American Robin:



Planning For October 22?

A Municipal Election Engagement Toolkit

As tax payers, all property owners and residents have a right to vote in the Ontario municipal elections on October 22. With severe funding cuts expected from the new Ontario government, this will be an important municipal election which will lead into four-plus years of funding and management challenges being downloaded from the province to counties and townships.

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) has created an elections Toolkit for members and Associations interested in getting out the vote in rural Ontario this fall!

The toolkit contains samples and templates you can use for communications, events, candidates' questions and more. It also has a handy Calendar "Checklist" on, to help keep your efforts on-track.

Also engaged voters can plan to host a "Vote for your Future" Pop-up booth at an event in your local community this season. See tips about holding such an event in this toolkit.

Download your "Vote for the Future" toolkit from the FOCA website which is at: **FOCA.ON.CA.**



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