

VILLA NEWS

When the Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob, Bobbin Along...

By Patty Shoults, Resident Services Coordinator

Since we are beginning our Bird Club this month I thought we'd begin by learning about Robins. The North American Robin is a migratory songbird of the thrush family. It is named after the European Robin because of the male's bright red breast. The American Robin is widely distributed throughout North America, wintering south of Canada from Florida to central Mexico and along the Pacific Coast. It is active mostly during the day and assembles in large flocks at night. The Robins' diet consists of beetle grubs, caterpillars, fruits and berries. It is one of the first birds to lay eggs, breeding shortly after returning to its summer range. Its nest consists of long coarse grass, twigs, paper, and feathers, and is smeared with mud. It is often cushioned with grass or other soft materials. The Robin is among the first birds to sing at dawn and the last to sing as evening sets in. The male Robin has a beautiful, complex and almost continuous song. It is commonly described as a cheery carol, made up of notes, often repeated and spliced together in a string of song with brief pauses in between. The American Robin is a known carrier for the West Nile Virus. While crows and jays are often the first noted deaths in an area with West Nile Virus, the Robin is suspected to be a key host and largely responsible for the transmission of the virus to humans. Apparently the Robin survives the virus longer than crows or jays, therefore able to spread it to more mosquitoes, which transmit the virus to humans.

