

American Robin

American Robin

Appearance

A chunky, heavy-bodied bird with a relatively small dark head. Sexually dimorphic, meaning the male and female look different. American Robins are a uniform dark gray with a brick red breast.



Female

Females are a lighter gray with a lighter breast.

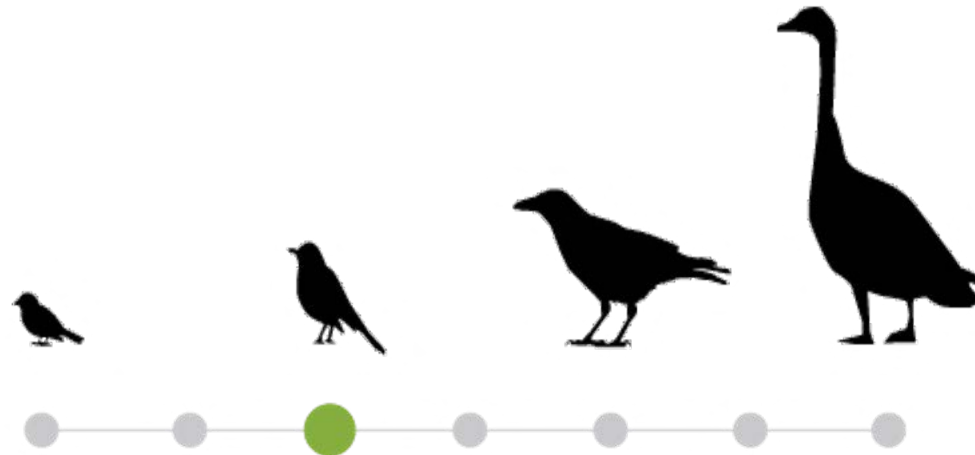


Male

Males tend to be darker with a brighter red breast.
Males are larger than females.

American Robin Appearance

American Robins are a medium-size bird with a length of about ten inches. They are so common that they are a good bird to compare size with when you come across an unknown bird. Is the bird bigger than an American Robin or smaller than an American Robin? Judging the size of a bird is very helpful in identifying an unknown bird.



American Robin Appearance

Juvenile American Robins have a speckled breast with a tint of rusty red.



American Robin Sounds

From The Cornell Lab of Ornithology: <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/>

SONGS

The musical song of the American Robin is a familiar sound of spring. It's a string of 10 or so clear whistles assembled from a few often-repeated syllables, and often described as *cheerily, cheer up, cheer up, cheerily, cheer up*. The syllables rise and fall in pitch but are delivered at a steady rhythm, with a pause before the bird begins singing again. At dawn, the song is more rapid.

CALLS

American Robins often make a mumbled *cuck* or *tuk* to communicate with each other or a sharp *yeep* or *peek* as an alarm call. They also make a repeated *chirr* that rises in volume and can sound like a laugh or chuckle.

OTHER SOUNDS

Female robins aggressively clack their bill if approached while on the nest.

Listen to the songs and calls at:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Robin/sounds

American Robin

Diet

Most people have seen an American Robin hopping along in their backyard or at a park and periodically grabbing a worm. They find worms by standing still in one place with their heads slightly cocked. It looks like they are listening but in fact they are looking very carefully.



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Diet

However, worms are not the only thing American Robins eat. They eat insects of all sorts, as well as spiders and snails. They also eat a variety of berries including chokecherries, dogwood, and mulberries. During spring and summer they eat more worms and invertebrates, but in the winter their diet consists mainly of fruit.



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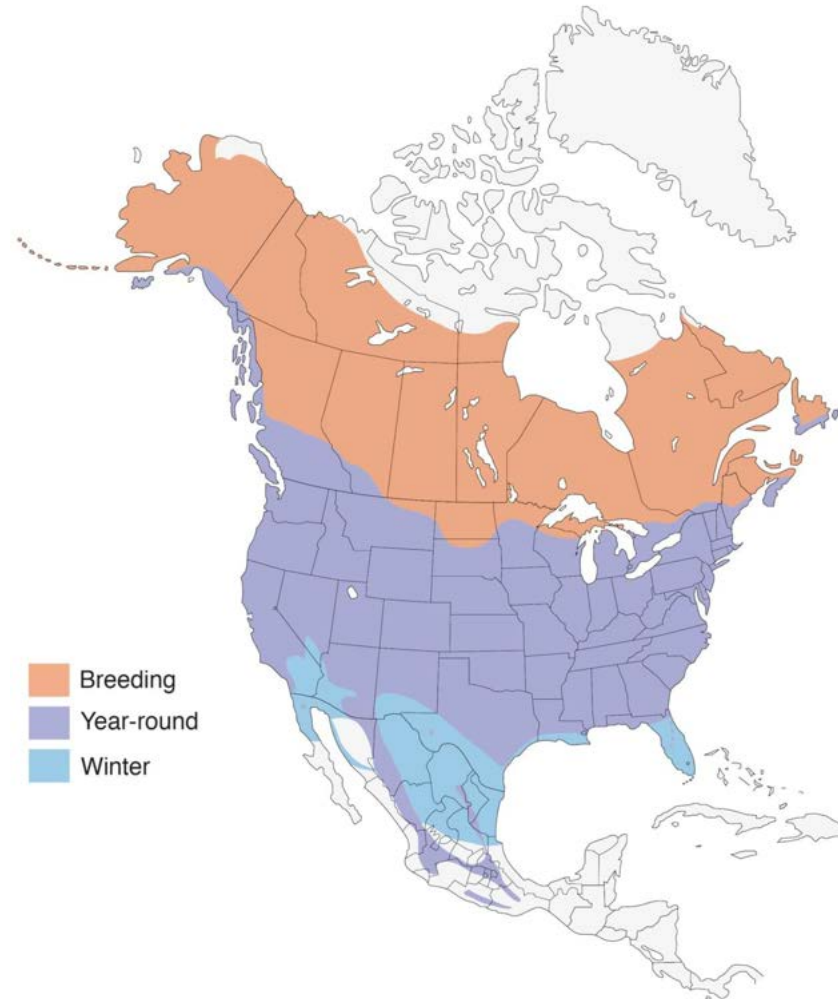
Habitat

American Robins can be found almost anywhere in the United States. They are highly adaptable to a wide variety of habitats and can be found in suburban yards, city parks, fields, and woodlands. They live as far north as Alaska and south to Florida.



American Robin Range

American Robins can be found year-round in DuPage County.



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Behavior

American Robins are interesting and easy birds to observe as they exhibit different types of behavior. Male American Robins arrive first in the spring and start to set up their territories. A behavior easily seen in the backyard is called “pushing.” One robin will take a few steps or run a short distance toward another robin, then the other robin moves a short distance away. This will be repeated until one of the robins flies off.



American Robin Behavior

If there is an intruder near the nest, American Robins will continually give the “tuk-tuk” call. A group of American Robins will mob an intruder. If you hear several American Robins fly over or high in a tree giving the “tuk-tuk” call, look carefully in that area, and you may spot a hawk that got too close to the nest.



American Robin Behavior

Female American Robins select the nest site.
Nests are built on horizontal branches in the middle or lower part of a tree with heavy foliage.



Female American Robin on her nest



Juvenile American Robin in the nest

American Robin

Behavior

But American Robins can be creative in their nest site selection and will build a nest in gutters, window ledges, outdoor light fixtures, or other unusual places.



American Robin Behavior

At the end of breeding season American Robins begin to gather in large flocks that feed together during the day and roost together at night.

In the early evening you can see small groups of American Robins flying together heading to their roost site.

American Robins do not have a definite migration. Northern American Robins will move farther south but some groups will stay north throughout the winter.



American Robin

Literature/Prose

The Robin is the One

by Emily Dickinson

The robin is the one
That interrupts the morn
With hurried, few, express reports
When March is scarcely on.

The robin is the one
That overflows the noon
With her cherubic quantity,
An April but begun.

The robin is the one
That speechless from her nest
Submits that home and certainty
And sanctity are best.



American Robin Feeders

American Robins are common backyard birds. They forage on the ground and in shrubs, but will also come to feeders. They will eat hulled sunflower seeds, suet, and fruit. They also will visit bird baths to drink and bathe.



American Robin Feeders

They also will visit bird baths to drink and bathe during winter.



American Robin

Names

Common name

American Robin

European settlers called the large, dark bird with the brick-red breast a *robin*, because the red breast reminded them of the European Robin (or Robin Redbreast) of Britain and Europe, which is actually a smaller, unrelated bird. The term *American* was added to the common name to distinguish this bird from the European bird.



Robin Redbreast

Scientific name

Turdus migratorius

Turdus means “thrush.” (Thrushes are generally alert, compact, small- to medium-size songbirds with an upright posture.)

migrare, “to move.” The American Robin is migratory in parts of its range.



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