

# School-to-Nature



## Robin

Robins are familiar birds, common on Conservancy lands and in our own yards. They are present in our area of Wisconsin in any season when they can find food. If they must migrate in winter, they go south just far enough to find unfrozen lawns, berries, or fruit to feed on. Robins are the state bird of Wisconsin. They were selected by Wisconsin children in the 1926/1927 school year, but this was not made official until 1949.

Robins belong to the family of Thrushes. They are expert songbirds, with several pretty calls. Robins are fairly large, 9 to 11 inches long, weighing about 2.7 ounces, with a wingspan of 12.2 to 16 inches. They live about 2 years. Robins nest, not very far from the ground, several times a season, hatching 3-5 eggs in about two weeks, caring for the chicks for another two weeks. Adults look after the fledglings until they can forage for themselves.

40% of their diet consists of earthworms, beetle grubs, caterpillars and grasshoppers. 60% is wild and cultivated fruits and berries. Homeowners will sometimes be surprised to see robins in winter months; but this is because there is a good supply of fruit or berries nearby. BH has seen them in her yard in February.



Juvenile Robins and eggs are preyed upon by squirrels, snakes and larger birds. Adults are hunted by hawks, cats and large snakes. Robins will band together to drive away a predator. Robins are impacted negatively by pesticides, since their diet includes insects.

The Robin is considered a symbol that spring is coming. In Native American mythology, the Robin got its red breast by fanning the dying flames of a campfire to save a Native American man and boy from freezing- a wonderful legend.

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