

WOODWORKING FOR NATURE



A PROGRAM OF LAND CARE NIAGARA



AMERICAN ROBIN & EASTERN PHOEBE NESTING PLATFORM

Installation and Management Instructions

Introduction

The American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) is a migratory songbird of the thrush family and one of the largest in North America [1]. The American robin is one of the most commonly known urban birds and is a joy to welcome back in the spring. Similarly, the Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) is another early migrant returning early in the spring. Its population coincides with humans as they build their mud and grass nests around buildings and bridges.

Nesting Platform Construction

Material Thickness: Ideally 1x6" inch (15.24cm) wood is ideal providing ample insulation to protect birds from excessive summer heat and unseasonably cold weather events during the nesting season

Design: The platform design has an 8" by 8" base, approximately an 8" ceiling, an open front and partially open sides.

Mounting a Nesting Platform

- Nest platform should be mounted between 5 feet (1.52m) to 25 feet (7.62m) off the ground.
- Nest platform can be mounted on a building in a sheltered site, under the eaves or soffits, or over a light fixture.

Location and Placement

The location of a nest box is one of the most important considerations in not only attracting birds, but also in optimizing their chances for successful nesting.

Habitat Preferences: American Robins are common across the continent in gardens, parks, yards, golf courses, fields, pastures, tundra, as well as deciduous woodlands, pine forests, shrub lands, and forests regenerating after fires or logging. The eastern phoebe prefers to inhabit along stream sides, farms, and woodland edges.

Placement of Nest Boxes: The nesting platform should be mounted facing foliage or open spaces on the side of sheds or other such structures.

Monitoring and Maintenance

Monitoring: Check your nest box at two-week intervals is optimum, preferably during the morning hours. A key trait knowing that an American Robin has taken occupancy is by the cup-shaped nest of mud mixed with grasses or small twigs and frequently with string, scraps of cloth, and small bits of paper. Other birds that commonly occupy this nesting platform are: Phoebe's, Blue Jays, Doves, and Song Sparrows.

Maintenance: Nesting platforms should be cleaned out after each brood of young leave the nest. This includes removing old eggs, nests, and any other contents a distance away as to not attract predators. A female American Robin can have up to three clutches of eggs per breeding season when conditions are favorable. Similarly the eastern phoebe typically has 2 broods per year. In removing all nest contents it allows for the possibility of another American Robin pair to take up residence.

Keep us informed on the success of the structure and share with us on our facebook page!

References & Further Information

1. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology. All About Birds - American Robin. Retrieved from <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Robin/lifehistory>