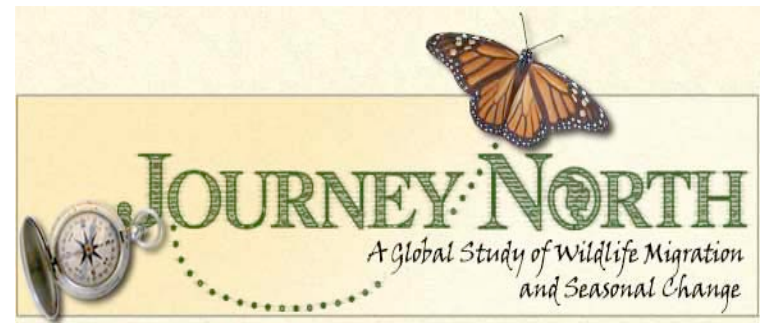




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Baby Robins: Welcome to the World!

by Jane Duden



Go Lay an Egg!

Why does Mother Robin lay just one egg a day? Carrying more than one egg in her small body would be like an airplane trying to fly with too much weight on board. One egg is just right.

Mom lets the eggs stay cool until all of them are laid. Then she starts the babies growing. She keeps the eggs just the right temperature. She spends about 50 minutes of every hour sitting on the eggs. Her body heat keeps the eggs warm in cold weather. It shades and cools them in hot weather.

Most robins lay 3 or 4 eggs for their first nest of spring. Second and third nestings of the season may have just 2 eggs.



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Tiny Babies Hatch

The first baby hatches 12-14 days after the last egg is laid.

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Each tiny baby weighs less than a quarter!

Hatching can take all day. Each chick must fight its way out of the egg. First it breaks a hole in the shell with its **egg tooth**, a hook on its beak. Then the baby pokes, stretches, and struggles inside the egg, with many stops to rest. Finally it breaks free.

Eggs usually hatch a day apart. They hatch in the order they were laid.



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New Babies Know 3 Things

A new baby robin already knows three things. It knows to sit very still when the parents are away. It knows to pop up and open its mouth to beg for food. It knows to poop as soon as it swallows some food. How does the nest stay clean? Come to the Journey North Web site and find out about disposable diapers for birds!

Babies feel the "bounce" on the nest when a parent comes back with food. They pop up with mouths wide open. Soon they learn their parents' sounds, too. By the time their eyes open, babies know their parents' voices.



So Very Hungry!

For the first four days of a **nestling's** life, the parent birds regurgitate partly digested food into each baby's mouth.

By five days of age, the nestlings get earthworms

that parents break into small mouthfuls.

The babies eat more each day. Soon parents give them whole worms and large insects. Each young robin may eat 14 feet of earthworms in a two-week nest life—and worms are not even their main food!

How can parents keep up? Both parents feed the babies. A robin might make 100 feeding visits to its nest each day. There's no time to go far on a food hunt. That's why a good territory is important to robins in spring.



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A Full House

Baby robins grow fast. In just two weeks they are the size of their parents!

Why do you think the parents sleep on a nearby branch after the first week, except when it rains?

Robin parents have full time jobs. They must protect the nest, find food, and feed the hungry babies. The babies are in the nest for at least 9 days, or as long as 16 days.

Who do you think does the most work—mom or dad?



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Bye Bye, Birdie!

Baby robins jump from their nest when they are about 13 days old. Leaving the nest is called **fledging**.

This is a time of great danger for baby birds. Please keep kitty indoors! Baby birds need time to practice flying.

Mom and dad still help feed them. The babies now sleep at night on a tree branch with dad. Mom is busy sitting on new eggs for her next brood.

The babies are good flyers just 10-15 days after fledging. They are independent birds. What's next? Visit Journey North on the Web to find out!