

# American Redstart

*Setophaga ruticilla*

## General Information:

-Birders enjoy watching this vivacious bird as it flits to catch insects or sits on a perch, partially spreading and drooping its wings and spreading its tail. Other warblers pump or flick their tails, but this bird fans its tail and holds it there for a second. The male's tail can be either orange and black or yellow and dusky olive-gray. This woodland inhabitant is one of the most common warblers nesting in North America.

## Song:

-Variable; sings often and through the heat of midday. The basic song is a 4-8 high-pitched, somewhat coarse notes, with explosive accented lower-ending *zeet-zeet-zeet-zweet-zeeeah*.

## Behavior:

-Solitary or in pairs, this bird is tame and conspicuous. Sing often and sallies into the air to catch insects, perching between hawking events like a small flycatcher. Gleans food from branches and foliage; hover-gleans. It eats insects, caterpillars, spiders, berries, fruits, and seeds.



## Breeding:

-Monogamous and a solitary nester.

## Nesting:

-Incubation of 11-12 days by the female. The 1-2 broods of altricial young per year are brooded by the female, fed by both sexes, and stay in the nest for 9 days.

## Population:

-Common to fairly common in wet deciduous and mixed conifer-deciduous woodland with under-story, woodland edges, riparian woodland, and areas of second growth. It is widespread, but is declining in the Midwest, Great Lakes, the Northeast, and the Maritime Provinces.

## Conservation:

-A neo-tropical migrant that is a common host to cowbird nest parasitism. Vulnerable to habitat loss caused by deforestation or maturation of second growth forests.

## Shoreline Restoration Issues:

- If you would like to create an environment friendly to the American Redstart I would recommend that you plant a diverse mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees along with berry producing shrubs. Excellent tree options are the Paper Birch, River Birch, Yellow Birch, American Elm, Red Pine, and Eastern White Pine. Excellent shrub options are Nannyberry, Choke Cherry, Pussy Willow, Silky Dogwood, Mountain-holly, Ninebark, Swamp Rose, and Black Chokeberry. I also recommend planting relatively large areas of ferns around the shrubs and planting emergent aquatic vegetation in the lakebed.