

**AMERICAN ROBIN NEST USE BY MOURNING DOVE IN  
SOUTHAVEN, MISSISSIPPI**

Hal Mitchell and Kristina Mitchell  
1363 Fox Chase Dr.  
Southaven, MS 38671

In April 2017, an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) constructed a nest on top of a lighting fixture in a suburban backyard in Southaven, Mississippi (Figure 1). Robins have built nests atop this lighting fixture for three consecutive years. This year, the nest construction began in mid-April, and two eggs were subsequently laid. The robins proceeded as usual with their nesting, and reared one nestling (Figure 1) that fledged on 29 April.

The nest remained unoccupied until 5 May, when we observed a Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) sitting on the nest. The dove laid two eggs on consecutive days (Figure 1) and began incubation on 7 May. The male was also observed incubating. On 27 May, we observed nestlings (Figure 1), estimated to be 4-5 days old (Hanson and Kossack 1957). Both nestling doves fledged, with the last fledging on 5 June (Figure 1).

It was not unusual that the doves used the robin nest, but what was unusual was that there did not appear to be any renovation of the nest from its previous condition. McClure (1941) noted that in almost every circumstance the male dove brings sticks to the other species host nest. We removed the nest several days after the last fledging, and heavy use and wear were evident.



Figure 1. American Robin nest used by American Robin then Mourning Dove. (A) American Robin brooding nestlings, 23 April 2017. (B) American Robin nestling, age 11-12 days, 28 April 2017. (C) Mourning Dove incubating eggs on former American Robin nest, 9 May 2017. (D) Mourning Dove eggs in former American Robin nest, 9 May 2017. (E) Mourning Dove nestlings, age 4-5 days, 27 May 2017. (F) Mourning Dove nestling, preparing to fledge at 13-14 days, 4 June 2017.

## **Literature Cited**

- Hanson, H.C., and C.W. Kossack. 1957. Methods and criteria for aging incubated eggs and nestlings of the Mourning Dove. *Wilson Bulletin* 69:91-101.
- McClure, H.E. 1941. Ecology and management of the mourning dove, *Zenaidura macroura* (Linn.), in southwest Iowa. Ph.D. dissertation, Iowa State College, Ames, IA.