

River Bend Naturalists Notebook

Presented by: RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER, Faribault, MN 55021

CARDINAL

Cardinalis cardinalis



The Cardinal has wandered northward and has established itself in parts of Minnesota, Michigan, New York, and even southern Ontario, where it was not found formerly. In spite of its brilliant color, the Cardinal has adapted itself well to civilization. There seems little doubt that there are more Cardinals today than there were in earlier times.

The Cardinal was first recorded in Minnesota on October 23, 1875 in Minneapolis. It probably entered Rice County between 1919 and 1925. Nesting was first reported from Wacouta, Goodhue County on June 29, 1919 and from Owatonna in Steele County on May 1, 1925. It now is a very common permanent resident in Southern Minnesota. Although the Cardinal is found as far north as the Great Lakes today, it is really most typical of the roadsides, swamps and gardens of the southern United States.

The nest is loosely built of twigs, vines,

some leaves, bark strips, grasses, weed stalks, rootlets and lined with fine grasses and hair. It is found placed in dense shrubbery, small deciduous and coniferous trees, thickets or vines 3 to 20 feet above the ground. The eggs are usually 2 to 5 in number, averaging 3 to 4. Incubation is by the female, with a 12 to 13 day incubation period. Besides weed seeds, the Cardinal eats insects and wild fruit.

-text by Orwin A. Rustad