



The larger male phoebe presents a moth to his mate, who flutters her wings in response.

saw the male phoebe fly to a nearby tree where he was joined by a female. As I approached the tree I noted that both birds were nervously flying from perch to perch, and I could hear their repeated alarm calls—a dead giveaway that I was very close to their nest.

In the absence of human structures, Say's Phoebes nest in cliffs, crevices, dirt or clay banks, and caves. Sure enough, after a careful search of the area, I located their nest, a combination of feathers, fluff, and other soft materials, a few feet off the ground. It contained two eggs and three newly hatched babies. The adults were still calling in alarm from the tree, so I left immediately to allow the female to brood her hatching young.

I returned twice to check on their progress, when the young were four and eight days old. Since everything was in order, I planned to

photograph the phoebes on July 11. I hoped they would prove to be cooperative subjects.

After setting up my blind carefully, I took great care in placing my strobe lights. I wanted to capture the blended browns and rusts of the phoebes against the green mosses of the crevice. I settled on tripod distances of three, three and a half, and four feet away, ensuring a blanket of soft light on the nest. Once everything was in place, I slipped into the blind, anxious to capture the results of my set-up with my camera.

I was gratified to see the adults adjust to my strobes quickly, and they resumed feeding the chicks within minutes of my entering the blind. I was able to get several great shots of the adults as they sat at the side of the nest. The Say's Phoebes seemed to have a stoical side to them, often

Each one of the wing and tail feathers is visible as the male phoebe departs the nest.

