

Acadian flycatcher *Empidonax virescens*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Tyrannidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The Acadian flycatcher is a small bird (five and one-half inches) with a relatively large head. Its bill is flattened and broad with tiny bristles at the end. The legs are very short. This flycatcher may be recognized by its light eye ring and two, white wing bars. The body feathers are green with yellow tinting on the sides. Both sexes are similar in appearance.

BEHAVIORS

The Acadian flycatcher is a common migrant and summer resident in bottomland forests, ravines, swampy woods and upland forests of central and southern Illinois. It may be seen in more northern locations in the state but not as frequently. This bird winters from Nicaragua to northern South America. Arriving in Illinois in late April or May, it nests along shaded waterways. The nest is placed about eight to 20 feet above the ground on a low branch of a large tree. The nest looks like a pile of weeds that could have been left in the tree by a flood. Plant stems, fibers and catkins are used by the female Acadian flycatcher to build the nest that is lined with plant materials and spider webs. Two to five white eggs with brown spots are laid. Nests are often parasitized by the brown-headed cowbird that deposits an egg that the Acadian flycatcher will hatch and raise, taking food and care away from its own young. Incubation takes 13 or 14 days and is done solely by the female. One brood of young birds per year is raised. The song of this bird is "pit-see," "wee-see" or "peet." The Acadian flycatcher eats insects. It rests by sitting straight up on bare tree limbs or wires.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie Habitats

None

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