

American avocet

Recurvirostra americana

FEATURES

The long, upturned, thin bill of this slender shorebird is a characteristic feature. The back and wing feathers display a black-and-white pattern. In the breeding season, the head and neck feathers are pink-tan to orange. In nonbreeding times those feathers are gray. The American avocet is about 18 inches long.

BEHAVIORS

American avocets start moving through Illinois in April for spring migration. Southward migrants can be seen as early as June, but the bulk of fall migration occurs from late July to early September. They are seen more often in fall than in spring in Illinois. This species breeds mainly in western North America and overwinters from the southern United States through Central America. Avocets visit mudflats, sandbars, lakeshores and grassy pools in search of the invertebrates that comprise their diet.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Recurvirostridae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE





© David W. Brewer





Aquatic Habitats

temporary water supplies; rivers and streams; wet prairies and fens; lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none