

American redstart

Setophaga ruticilla

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Passeriformes
Family: Parulidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The American redstart averages about five inches in length. The male has black feathers with orange patches on the wings and tail. The female has green-brown feathers with yellow patches on the wings and tail. The immature male is colored like the female except the wing and tail patches are orange.

BEHAVIORS

This bird is a common migrant and summer resident statewide in Illinois. It winters from the southern United States to South America. Males arrive in Illinois in spring before the females. Nesting occurs from May through July. The nest is placed in the fork of a tree or shrub about four to 30 feet above the ground. The nest is composed of plant materials and is lined with grasses, hair and sometimes feathers. The outside of the nest is covered with lichens, bark, bud scales and other plant materials held together with spider silk. The female builds the nest in about one week. Three to five white eggs with red-brown markings are laid by the female. The incubation period takes 12 to 13 days. One brood per year is raised. Fall migration begins in late July. The redstart can be seen flitting from branch to branch in trees of bottomland woods and other deciduous woods. It droops its wings and fans its tail to show off its colors. This bird sings several songs, the most common being a series of “zee” with the last note higher. It eats insects.

ILLINOIS RANGE





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male



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female

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none