

American white pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Pelecaniformes

Family: Pelecanidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

An adult American white pelican stands 62 inches high. It has white feathers with black wing tips. Both sexes are similar in appearance. This bird has a long, flat, yellow-orange bill. The neck is long and has a throat pouch.

BEHAVIORS

The American white pelican is a migrant along the Mississippi River. It winters in the southern United States, along the Gulf of Mexico. It breeds in the northern plains states and Canada. The American white pelican may be seen on rivers, ponds, lakes or marshes. These birds fly in lines. Its call is a long groan. The American white pelican eats crustaceans and fishes. It does not plunge to get fish, but simply scoops up fish while it is paddling on the water. These birds often work in groups to feed.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; marshes

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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