

anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Suliformes

Family: Anhingidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, nonnative

FEATURES

The anhinga, or water turkey, is 34-35 inches in length. The bird's neck is long and thin, and the bill is long and pointed. The tail feathers are long and tipped with a white band. There is a large, silver-white patch of feathers on the upper edge of each wing. The remainder of the male's feathers are black. The female has buff-colored feathers on her head and neck, and black feathers on the locations not described as white or silver-white above.

BEHAVIORS

The anhinga visits the state from the south (Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, etc.), and its range may be expanding into Illinois. It is possible that anhingas that have finished nesting fly north and enter the state for the late summer season. These birds are found around large bodies of water where they eat fishes and other small aquatic animals. When perching, it often spreads its wings open. It may swim below the water's surface with only its head emerging.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams; swamps; lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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