

bank swallow *Riparia riparia*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Hirundinidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

An adult bank swallow is four and one-half to five and one-half inches in length. Both sexes are similar in appearance. The body feathers are brown, and there are white belly and chest feathers. There is a distinct brown stripe across the top of the chest.

BEHAVIORS

The bank swallow is a common migrant and summer resident in Illinois. It winters in South America, as far south as Chile. The bank swallow lives in open areas, over fields, in marshes and along streams, lakes and ponds. It feeds on insects. Its call is "brrrt" or "bjjt." This bird is colonial (stays in large groups). It has an unsteady flight pattern with irregular fluttering. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in late March and April. Nesting occurs from May to July. Nests are placed in banks along waterways or roadways or in sand mounds. Nests are in colonies of 20 to 2,000 pairs. Nest cavities average two to three feet deep and contain three to seven white eggs. Fall migration begins by late July.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; marshes; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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