

black vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Cathartiformes

Family: Cathartidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The black vulture averages 23 to 27 inches in length. It has a short tail. Except for white patches in the wing tips which can be seen as it flies, this bird is entirely black, including its bare head and legs.

BEHAVIORS

The black vulture is an uncommon, permanent resident in extreme southern Illinois. It is occasionally seen as a vagrant elsewhere in the state. Nesting occurs in April and May. No nest is built. The female lays two eggs in a shallow cave or tree cavity. The gray-green to dull-white eggs have brown marks. Both the male and female take turns incubating during the 28- to 39-day incubation period. This bird lives in swampy woodlands and bluffs. It feeds by scavenging for dead organisms.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie Habitats

none

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