

blue grosbeak *Passerina caerulea*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Cardinalidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The blue grosbeak is six and three-fourths inches long (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). The adult male has dull, blue feathers, a thick bill and two, rust-red wing bars. The immature male has a mix of brown and blue feathers. The female has a thick bill, brown feathers that are slightly lighter on the bottom side of the bird and two, red-tan wing bars. The female's rump and tail feathers may show a blue tint.

BEHAVIORS

The blue grosbeak lives in thickets, in fence rows, along rivers, in brushy and weedy areas and in agricultural fields. It eats seeds, grains, fruits and insects. This species is an uncommon migrant and a summer resident decreasing northward. It seems to be associated with sandy areas in central Illinois and poor-soil areas in southern Illinois. It may be expanding its range northward. It winters in Central America.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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