

## Brewer's blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Icteridae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

Brewer's blackbird averages nine inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). The male has all black feathers. The male's eyes are white. The feathers are shiny and show purple reflections from the head and green reflections from the body. The female has gray-brown feathers and a dark eye. The thick bill is cone-shaped, pointed and sharp.

### BEHAVIORS

Brewer's blackbird is an uncommon migrant statewide, a rare winter resident in the southern one-third of the state and a rare summer resident in northern Illinois. It lives in open habitats like plowed fields, wet pastures and marshy areas. In winter this bird may be seen at feedlots and bird feeders. Its song is "quee-ee" or "ksh-eee." Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in late February or early March. The nest is built on or near the ground in vegetation clumps or in shrubs or trees. Built by the female, the nest is composed of twigs, grasses, mud, and often, cow manure. It is lined with plant material and horse hair. The female deposits three to five, light gray to green-gray eggs with red-brown blotches. She incubates the eggs for the entire 12- to 14-day incubation period. Fall migrants begin arriving in Illinois from the north in October. Brewer's blackbird feeds on insects, fruits, grains and seeds.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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