

## Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Anseriformes

Family: Anatidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The bufflehead is about 13 and one-half to 14 inches long (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). The male has black, back and wing feathers and white feathers on the remainder of the body and onto the part of the wings closest to the body. A large white patch of feathers is present from below the eye to the top of the head. The remainder of the head feathers are green, purple and brown. The female has dark, gray-brown feathers on her wings and body with a white-feathered cheek patch, a small, white wing patch and white belly feathers. The hind toe has a flap. The legs are located close to the tail.

### BEHAVIORS

The bufflehead can be seen at lakes, ponds, rivers and sewage lagoons. It is a diving duck. It must run across the water's surface to take flight. This species eats small invertebrates and fishes. It is a common migrant and uncommon winter resident in Illinois. It nests in Alaska, Canada and the northern United States.

### HABITATS

#### Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; marshes; rivers and streams; swamps; lakes, ponds and reservoirs

#### Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

#### Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2020. Biodiversity of Illinois.