

## cedar waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Bombycillidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The cedar waxwing averages about seven inches in length. This brown-feathered bird has a brown crest and a yellow band at the tip of its tail. The immature bird has gray-brown feathers with streaks on the belly. The name “waxwing” comes from the red, waxy tips on the wings.

### BEHAVIORS

The cedar waxwing is a common migrant statewide and an uncommon summer and winter resident statewide. It winters as far south as Panama. The first group of spring migrants arrives from January through mid-April with a second spring migration from early May through mid-June. Nesting occurs from June through August. Nests may be in small colonies. The nest is built on a limb from four to 50 feet above the ground. Both the male and female build the nest of grasses, twigs, string and yarn over a five- to seven-day period. The nest is lined with rootlets and other plant materials. The female lays three to five pale, blue-gray eggs with dark spots. Egg-laying is tied to the availability of fruit. The female alone incubates for the 12- to 13-day incubation period, although the male brings her food during this time. Two broods of young are raised each year. Fall migration commences in August. The cedar waxwing lives in open woodlands, orchards and residential areas. This bird is often seen around trees that are bearing fruit. It makes a high-pitched whistling noise (“zee”). The cedar waxwing eats insects and fruits, particularly crab apples, wild cherries and mulberries.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; peatlands

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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