

Chuck-will's-widow

Antrostomus carolinensis

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Caprimulgiformes
Family: Caprimulgidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

threatened, native

ILLINOIS RANGE



FEATURES

Chuck-will's-widow averages about 12 inches in length. It has brown feathers with some white on the throat. The tail feathers of the male show some white, too. The wings appear to be rounded. This bird has a small bill and a very large mouth.

BEHAVIORS

Chuck-will's-widow is an uncommon migrant and summer resident statewide in Illinois. It winters from the southern United States to Columbia, South America. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in late March or early April. Two white eggs with gray or purple blotches and brown spots are laid on leaves or pine needles on the ground, with no nest built. Both sexes take turns incubating during the 20-day incubation period. Fall migration begins in September. This nocturnal bird may be found in both oak and pine forests, forest edges, upland areas and river woodlands. Its call is "Chuck-will's widow," which is how it got its common name. The first syllable of the call is often hard for humans to hear. It eats insects that it catches while flying and occasionally a small bird. Habitat destruction and degradation have led to the decline of this species in Illinois.



Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none