

common yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Parulidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

An adult common yellowthroat is four and one-half to five and one-half inches in length. It has yellow-olive body feathers with bright-yellow throat feathers and white belly feathers. The bill is short and black. The male has a black facial mask with a white line at the top of the mask. The female has olive head feathers, yellow throat feathers and no black facial mask.

BEHAVIORS

The common yellowthroat is a common migrant and summer resident in Illinois. It is a rare winter resident. This bird winters from the southern United States south to central America. The common yellowthroat lives in swamps, old fields, thickets, forests and marshes. This bird eats insects. Its call is "witchity-witchity-witchity-witch" or "witchity-ta-witchity-ta-witchity-ta-witch." This bird stays very close to the ground. Spring migrants begin to arrive in Illinois in April. The nesting season occurs from May through July. The nest is built low to the ground in thick vegetation. Three to six white eggs with brown spots are laid. Cowbirds are known to parasitize yellowthroat nests, leaving an egg that will hatch into a young cowbird that the yellowthroats will feed and care for. Fall migration begins in August.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; swamps; marshes

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2017. Biodiversity of Illinois.