

dunlin

Calidris alpina

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The dunlin is about eight and one-half to slightly more than eight and three-fourths inches long (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). Its legs are black. The bill is relatively long and bends downward slightly at the tip. The breeding bird has rust-colored feathers on the back and a black patch of feathers on the belly. The nonbreeding bird has gray-brown feathers on the back with light-gray feathers on the breast.

BEHAVIORS

This species is an uncommon spring migrant and a common fall migrant. Spring migrants begin appearing in March and peak in May. They breed in the Arctic. Southbound birds start appearing in late August and peak in October. Overwintering occurs on the Gulf, Pacific and Atlantic coasts of the United States. Dunlins visit mudflats and beaches in search of small invertebrates.

ILLINOIS RANGE



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Aquatic Habitats

ponds; marshes

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge