

eastern whip-poor-will *Antrostomus vociferous*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Caprimulgiformes

Family: Caprimulgidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The eastern whip-poor-will averages nine and one-half inches in length. Its body feathers are brown with darker marks. Tail feather patches are white in the male and buff-colored in the female. The mouth is large with a small bill. The wings are rounded.

BEHAVIORS

The eastern whip-poor-will is a common migrant and summer resident statewide. It winters from the southern and southeastern United States to Panama. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in March. Nesting takes place from May through June. This bird nests on the ground in open areas of woodlands or along woodland edges, laying eggs on oak leaves. Two white eggs with faint spots are incubated by the female over a 19-day incubation period. One brood is raised per year. The bird may return to the same location year after year to nest. Fall migration starts in August. The whip-poor-will lives in woodlands. Its “whip-poor-will” vocalization is how it attained its common name. This bird calls most often at dawn and dusk. It feeds by flying over brushy pastures and along woodland edges, catching insects in its large mouth.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

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

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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