

eastern wood-pewee *Contopus virens*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Tyrannidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The eastern wood-pewee averages six to six and one-half inches in length. It has dark-gray feathers on its back, tail and head. The belly feathers are light yellow-gray. Two white bars are present on each wing. The presence of the wing bars and the lack of a white ring around the eye help to distinguish this bird from other similar flycatchers.

BEHAVIORS

The eastern wood-pewee is a common migrant and summer resident statewide. It winters in South America as far south as Peru and Brazil. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in late April. Nesting takes place from May through July. The nest is placed about 15 to 65 feet above the ground on a horizontal tree limb, far away from the trunk. Built by the female, the nest is made of and lined with weeds, bark, grasses, spider webs and lichens. The outside of the nest is covered with lichens. Two to four cream-colored eggs with red-brown marks are laid by the female, and she incubates them during the 12- to 13-day incubation period. Fall migrants begin leaving Illinois in October. The eastern wood-pewee lives in upland forests, bottomland forests, orchards, city parks and forest edges. Its song is “pee-a-wee,” and it may be heard singing all day. This bird eats insects.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

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

Prairie Habitats

none

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