

## fox sparrow *Passerella iliaca*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Passerellidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The fox sparrow averages about seven inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). This large sparrow has a rust-red tail. The breast is white with rust-red streaks. The upper back is a mixture of rust and gray. The male and the female have the same appearance.

### BEHAVIORS

The fox sparrow is a common migrant statewide and a common winter resident in southern Illinois. It may be seen in woodland edges, brush, weedy areas, fence rows and thickets. Fox sparrows forage singly or in small flocks. The bird is often heard before it is seen, as it kicks leaf litter in undergrowth to find food. Its song is variable with notes and whistles. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in February. Fall migrants start returning to the state in late September. The fox sparrow eats insects, seeds and fruits.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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