

gadwall *Mareca strepera*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Anseriformes

Family: Anatidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The gadwall is about 19-20 inches long (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). The male has gray feathers on his body with brown feathers on the head and neck. The rump feathers are black. There is a white patch of feathers on the rear of the wing and a rust-red patch of feathers on the forewing. The belly feathers are white. The feet are yellow, and the bill is dark. The female has brown body feathers with lighter brown feathers on her head and neck and a white patch of feathers on the rear edge of the wing. Her feet are yellow, and her bill is gray with orange sides.

BEHAVIORS

The gadwall can be seen at lakes, ponds, marshes and sewage lagoons. It eats aquatic plants and small invertebrates. When feeding in water, it tips the upper half of the body into the water or reaches under water with its bill. It may also feed on land. This species is a common migrant, rare summer resident and winter resident in Illinois. It nests mainly in North Dakota, South Dakota and Canada. Gadwalls that migrate through Illinois winter in Tennessee or Louisiana.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; marshes; rivers and streams; swamps; lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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