

great crested flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Tyrannidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The great crested flycatcher averages about eight to nine inches in length. Its wings and tail have red-brown feathers. The breast feathers are gray, and the belly feathers are yellow. The head may have a crest of feathers.

BEHAVIORS

The great crested flycatcher is a common migrant and summer resident statewide. It winters from Florida to northern South America. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in April. Nesting takes place in May and June. The nest site may be in upland or bottomland woods, mainly in an oak tree in the forest interior. This species may nest in a tree cavity, old woodpecker hole or nest box. The nest is made of leaves, feathers, hair, sticks, bark and other materials. A snake skin is usually placed in the nest. Both sexes construct the nest over a two-week period. The female deposits three to seven white or yellow-white eggs with purple blotches. She incubates the eggs for the 13- to 15-day incubation period. Fall migration begins in August. The great crested flycatcher lives in woodlands, swamps, old orchards and groves of trees. Its call is “creep” or “prrrreeet.” It tends to stay in leafy parts of trees so it may be hard to see except when it flies from its perch to capture an insect. This bird eats insects while in flight and picks them off leaves high in trees.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

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

Prairie Habitats

none

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