

hermit thrush *Catharus guttatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Turdidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The hermit thrush averages seven inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). This bird has gray-brown feathers on the head, back and wings. The ventral (lower) side has white feathers with dark, red-brown spots. The tail feathers are rust-colored, and the legs are pink. The hermit thrush has large eyes and a slender beak.

BEHAVIORS

This species is a common migrant and an uncommon winter resident throughout Illinois. It lives in woodlands. When perched, it may cock its tail and drop it slowly, a helpful identification trait. It makes a flutelike song. The hermit thrush breeds in conifers in Canada, Alaska, the northern continental United States, as close to Illinois as central Wisconsin, and the Rocky Mountains. The female builds the nest on the ground, usually under a small tree, shrub or other plant. Three or four, pale-blue eggs are deposited by the female and incubated by her for the 12-day incubation period. The male feeds her during this time. Spring migration occurs in late March. Most fall migrants arrive in Illinois in late September. The hermit thrush eats insects, when available, and fruits at other times.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2017. Biodiversity of Illinois.