

house wren

Troglodytes aedon

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Passeriformes
Family: Troglodytidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native



© U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

adult at nest in gourd



© Chris Young, State Journal-Register

adult at nest box

FEATURES

The house wren averages four and one-half to five inches in length. It has gray-brown body feathers. A light ring can be seen around each eye. Unlike other similar wrens, the house wren has no stripe on its face.

BEHAVIORS

The house wren is a common migrant and summer resident statewide. It is a rare winter resident. This bird usually overwinters from the southern United States to Mexico. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in April. Nesting takes place from May through August. The house wren nests in natural cavities, old woodpecker holes, bird boxes or any enclosed space with the correct entrance size. The male builds several incomplete nests of sticks and shows them to the female. If she accepts one, she completes the nest with feathers, hair, grasses, rootlets and other materials. The female lays four to eight brown eggs that have red-brown spots. She incubates the eggs for the 12- to 15-day incubation period. Two broods are raised each year. The house wren has been known to use its bill to puncture the eggs of other birds, especially those that it competes with for nest sites. Fall migration begins in September. This bird lives in woodlands, residential areas, thickets, forest edges, orchards and semi-open areas. Its song is a gurgling series of notes that rise, then fall. It usually stays near the ground, feeding almost entirely on insects.

ILLINOIS RANGE





adult feeding young at nest box

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

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

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none