

Lapland longspur *Calcarius lapponicus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Calcariidae

ILLINOIS STATUS: common, native

FEATURES

The Lapland longspur is about six and one-quarter inches in length (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). The breeding male has a black face highlighted with a white zig-zag mark and rust-red on the back of the head. The breeding female's coloration resembles the nonbreeding male (few black streaks on sides, patch of rust-red on back of head). All coloration phases include red-brown wing coverts and a triangular white patch on each side of the tail base.

BEHAVIORS

The Lapland longspur is a common winter resident and migrant statewide. These birds start moving through Illinois in late September on their southward migration. Spring migrants begin appearing in late February. They winter as far south as the Gulf Coast. Open areas, including farm fields, are the preferred habitats. The birds feed on seeds, grains and insects.

Aquatic Habitats: none

Woodland Habitats: none

Prairie and Edge Habitats: black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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