

least sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The least sandpiper has legs that are green or yellow. Upper-body feathers are brown in juveniles and breeding birds, and there are light-brown feathers on the breast. Nonbreeding birds are more gray-brown. The bill has a very slight droop at the tip. The least sandpiper is about six inches long.

BEHAVIORS

This species is a common migrant through Illinois. Spring migrants begin appearing in March. The species nests in Alaska and northern Canada. Southbound migrants arrive starting in late June. Overwintering occurs the coastal southern United States to South America. Mudflats, marshes, shores, flooded fields and wet, grassy areas are the habitats most often used by this species. It eats small invertebrates.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

marshes; temporary water supplies; rivers and streams; wet prairies and fens; lakes, ponds and reservoirs; Lake Michigan

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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