

Louisiana waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Parulidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

An adult Louisiana waterthrush is five to six inches in length. The male and female are similar in appearance. The back feathers are brown while the belly has white feathers with brown speckles. There is a white stripe on each side of the face, and the throat feathers are white. Its bill is short, thin and pointed. The legs are orange.

BEHAVIORS

The Louisiana waterthrush is a common migrant and summer resident in southern Illinois. It may be found in the rest of the state but not as frequently. It winters from the southern United States to northern South America. The Louisiana waterthrush lives along fast-running streams and creeks, in ravines and in swamps. It eats a variety of insects. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in March. The nesting season occurs from May through June. This bird nests in tree roots or in cracks in rocks near flowing water. Four to six white eggs speckled with red-brown are laid. Cowbirds are known to parasitize Louisiana waterthrush nests, leaving an egg that will hatch into a cowbird that the waterthrushes will feed and care for. This bird leaves Illinois in late July or early August.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; upland deciduous forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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