

mourning dove *Zenaida macroura*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Columbiformes

Family: Columbidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The mourning dove averages about 12 inches in length. It has gray-brown body feathers with some dark spots at the base of the wings. The pointed tail feathers have white edging.

BEHAVIORS

The mourning dove is a common migrant and summer resident statewide. It is also a common winter resident statewide. Spring migration into Illinois begins in late April. Nesting occurs from March through September. This bird nests in trees, especially evergreens, about 10 to 25 feet above the ground. The nest is a flimsy-looking platform of sticks. This dove may place its twig nest over an old nest of another bird. Two white eggs are laid by the female. The male (during the day) and the female (at night) incubate for the 13- to 14-day incubation period. Several broods are raised each year. Many doves seen in Illinois in late summer are migrants from farther north. Illinois doves begin migrating in September and winter in Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Texas and Central America. Some doves do overwinter in Illinois. The mourning dove may be found in open habitats including shrubs, hedgerows, clover fields, grasslands, orchards, marshes, urban areas and open woods. It makes a “coah, cooo, cooo, coo” sound. This bird feeds on foxtail grass, corn, wheat, crabgrass, prairie grass and other plant materials.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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