

pied-billed grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Podicipediformes

Family: Podicipedidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

An adult pied-billed grebe is 12 to 15 inches long. It has brown body feathers. Its bill is rounded, and the upper portion of the bill curves downward (other grebes have a pointed bill). This bird has a narrow head and neck. The arrangement of the feathers makes it seem like the grebe does not have a tail. Its tail is white on the underside.

BEHAVIORS

The pied-billed grebe lives on ponds, lakes, marshes, sloughs and rivers. This bird usually dives under water when it senses danger. After a dive, it often surfaces in vegetation. While resting, it holds its head erect. It has a cuckoo-like call (cow-cow-cow-cow-cow-cow-cowk-cowk). This bird makes its nest on a floating mat anchored to plants. Three to nine tan eggs are laid per clutch during the nesting period of May through July. After hatching, the young may be seen riding on their parents' back as the adults swim through the water. The pied-billed grebe feeds on aquatic insects, crayfish, small fishes, frogs and mollusks (snails and mussels).

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; marshes; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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