

red-necked phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The red-necked phalarope is about seven and three-fourths inches long (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). Its bill is black and needle-shaped. A dark patch is present through the eye. The female is more brightly colored than the male. In breeding coloration, the female has dark gray feathers on the back with an orange-red patch of feathers on the throat and sides of the neck that surrounds a white patch. The breeding male has a similar pattern but is duller. In nonbreeding coloration, both sexes have gray and white feathers on the back, and white feathers on the ventral side. Phalaropes have lobed toes that allow them to swim as well as wade in water.

BEHAVIORS

This shorebird is an excellent swimmer as well as a wader. It is often seen far away from shore on the ocean. It breeds in the Arctic and winters on the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. It feeds by spinning in the water and picking food, mainly plankton, insects and other small invertebrates, from the water. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in May. Fall migrants start appearing in the state in July.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

temporary water supplies; rivers and streams; lakes, ponds, reservoirs; Lake Michigan

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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