

ring-billed gull *Larus delawarensis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Laridae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

An adult ring-billed gull is 18 to 20 inches long. Its body has gray feathers with long, wide wings. The legs and eyes are yellow-green. There is a black ring around the tip of the yellow bill. The underside of the wing is black. The tail is squared.

BEHAVIORS

The ring-billed gull is a common migrant and winter resident in Illinois. It is a rare summer resident. The ring-billed gull lives near lakes, rivers, dumps, flooded fields, airports, golf courses and plowed fields. It eats primarily plants but will also feed on amphibians, insects, fishes, garbage and mollusks (snails, clams). The bird roosts on the water and flies out each day to feed in fields. It will drop a mollusk onto a bed of rocks to open the shell. This gull's call is a loud and high pitched "kee-ow, kee-ow." Fall migrants may be seen in Illinois as early as late June. Spring migrants begin returning to the state in February.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

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

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge