

rock pigeon *Columba livia*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Columbiformes

Family: Columbidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, nonnative

FEATURES

The rock pigeon is also known as the domestic pigeon. This bird averages 13 inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). It generally has gray feathers with white rump feathers, two black wing bars and a broad, black band at the tip of the tail. There are many plumage variations for this bird.

BEHAVIORS

The rock pigeon is a permanent resident statewide in Illinois. Rock pigeons are very numerous in urban areas, although they are also found in rural habitats. The nesting season lasts nearly year round with several broods produced. These birds nest on bridges, overpasses, barns, grain elevators, in trees or almost anywhere there is a ledge. Nests may be placed in a colony or singly. The nest is made of plant materials and debris and has very little structure. One or two, white eggs are deposited by the female. The male and the female alternate incubation duties over the 17- to 19-day incubation period. The rock pigeon eats waste grain, seeds, fruits and insects. In urban areas, people often provide food for this species. The call is “co-roo-coo.” The rock pigeon was introduced to North America from Europe in about 1606. It was first released in Nova Scotia. The species was introduced into what is now the United States in about 1621. This bird is often considered a pest because its roosting habits can lead to large amounts of waste materials being produced in or near buildings.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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