

rusty blackbird *Euphagus carolinus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Icteridae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The rusty blackbird is about nine inches long. The rusty coloration on the head, back, edges of flight feathers and throat is only seen in fall and winter on the nonbreeding birds and immatures of this species. During the rest of the year the feathers are black (male) or dark gray (female). The breeding plumage on the male's head may show a green sheen. His eyes are pale yellow. The breeding plumage on the female is dark gray. Her eyes are light in color.

BEHAVIORS

The rusty blackbird lives in swamps, trees along rivers, woodland edges, grain fields and pond edges. It eats insects, seeds, grains, fruits and small aquatic invertebrates and may feed while wading in shallow water. Its song sounds like a rusty hinge. This species nests in Alaska, Canada and the northern United States. Spring migration into the state may start as early as February. Fall migrants begin arriving in September.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams; swamps; lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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