

semipalmated plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Charadriidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

An adult semipalmated plover is six and one-half to seven and one-half inches in length. It has a small, plump body with brown feathers on the back and head. The feathers on the underside are white. Both sexes are similar in appearance. There is one black band on the neck. The legs are yellow-orange. In the winter, its bill is black, but during the summer, the bill is yellow with a black tip.

BEHAVIORS

The semipalmated plover is a fairly common migrant through Illinois. It winters in Chile and Argentina in South America, and it breeds on the tundra in Alaska and Canada. The semipalmated plover lives on the shorelines of lakes and rivers, flooded fields and mudflats. It eats aquatic insects, small aquatic organisms and vegetation as it wades at the water's edge. This bird will run short distances and then stop, repeating the process as it moves along. It is seen singly or in small flocks. The semipalmated plover's call is "chee-wee" or "too-li." This bird breeds on the tundra in Alaska and northern Canada. Spring migration through Illinois begins in April. Birds start returning south in late June and July.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

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

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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