

sharp-shinned hawk

Accipiter striatus

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Accipitriformes
Family: Accipitridae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The sharp-shinned hawk averages about 10 to 14 inches in length. It has short, rounded wings, a thin tail and a thin body. The adult has dark-gray back feathers and rust-colored bars on the white breast feathers. The immature hawk has brown back feathers and brown streaks on the breast feathers. The tail appears squared at the end when folded.

BEHAVIORS

The sharp-shinned hawk is a common migrant, an uncommon winter resident and a rare summer resident statewide. It winters as far south as Panama. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in March. Most nest in northern coniferous areas but records do exist for Illinois nests. The nest is placed 20 to 60 feet above the ground in a conifer or deciduous tree. It is constructed of sticks and built on a limb next to the trunk. The female lays four or five blue-white eggs with brown marks. Both the male and female take turns incubating the eggs during the 21-to 24-day incubation period. Fall migration begins in September. The sharp-shinned hawk lives in woodlands and thickets. It makes a shrill “kik, kik, kik” noise. It flies by beating the wings several times then gliding. This bird eats other birds and small mammals.

ILLINOIS RANGE



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Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands;
upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge