

## solitary sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The solitary sandpiper averages eight to nine inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). The side of this bird's tail is white with dark bars. Its upper chest feathers have dark mottling while the lower chest feathers are white. The back and wing feathers are dark brown. A light eye ring is present. The solitary sandpiper has green legs.

### BEHAVIORS

The solitary sandpiper is a common migrant throughout Illinois. It may be seen in the wooded edges of mudflats, woodland pools and ponds, sewage lagoons, stream edges and open mudflats. It tends to be found singly. If in groups, it is acting only as an individual. Like many sandpipers, it teeters as it moves. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in late March. These birds nest in coniferous forests in Canada and Alaska. The solitary sandpiper lays its eggs in the deserted nest of a songbird. Fall migrants begin returning to Illinois in late June. This bird winters from the coast of the Gulf of Mexico to Peru, Argentina and Uruguay. The solitary sandpiper eats insects, small crustaceans, small mollusks and other aquatic animals. Its call is "peet-weet," made while it flies.

### HABITATS

#### Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; Lake Michigan; marshes; rivers and streams; swamps; temporary water supplies; wet prairies and fens

#### Woodland Habitats

none

#### Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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