

## spotted sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

An adult spotted sandpiper is seven to eight inches in length. This bird has large brown spots on its chest feathers during the spring and summer. In fall and winter, its chest feathers and belly feathers are plain white. There are white marks on its shoulders and near each eye. The feathers on the side of the face are brown. It has gray-olive legs.

### BEHAVIORS

The spotted sandpiper is a migrant through Illinois. It is a common summer resident in northern Illinois and may be seen in southern Illinois. This bird winters in the southern coastal United States south to South America. The spotted sandpiper may be found on the shores of ponds, streams, lakes, Lake Michigan, gravel pits and sewage lagoons. It consumes mostly insects and worms. It flies low over the water with its wings curved. The call is "peet-weet." The spotted sandpiper is easily recognized by its teetering motion. This bird may be found singly or in groups of two or three. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in late March. The spotted sandpiper nests during May or June on the ground in a depression that it lines with grasses and plant stems. Typically, four eggs are deposited in the nest. Eggs are tan with black markings. Young leave the nest by the end of June. Fall migration starts in late July.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

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

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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