

## swamp sparrow *Melospiza georgiana*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Passerellidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The swamp sparrow is about five and three-quarters inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). This species has dark stripes on the back and rust-red wing feathers. The cap feathers are also rust-red. The throat feathers are white, and the neck and upper chest feathers are blue-gray. Immature birds have dark cap feathers and more of a dark olive coloration on the neck and upper chest feathers than the adult.

### BEHAVIORS

This bird is a common migrant statewide. It is an uncommon summer resident in northern Illinois, decreasing southward. It is a common winter resident in southern Illinois, decreasing northward. Spring migration starts in March. Fall migrants begin passing through in September. It winters as far south as the southeastern United States and Central America. The swamp sparrow is found in marshes, pond edges, ditches and other shrubby areas around water. It feeds on seeds, small fruits and invertebrates.

### HABITATS

#### Aquatic Habitats

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

#### Woodland Habitats

none

#### Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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