

## western sandpiper *Calidris mauri*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The western sandpiper is about six and one-half inches long. The female's bill is black and droops slightly downward at the tip. This species has black legs. In the breeding season, the breast feathers are white with black spots. There are rust-colored feathers on the top of the head, behind the eye and on the upper section of the wings. The remainder of the wing feathers are gray, brown and black. Nonbreeding birds are gray or gray-brown on the wings and back with few or no markings on the white underside.

### BEHAVIORS

Western sandpipers nest in the Arctic tundra. When migrating through Illinois, they can be seen at beaches, shorelines, marshes and muddy areas in fields. They will feed by wading in water, often farther out than other small sandpipers. They eat small aquatic invertebrates. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in late April. Fall migrants start passing through in mid-July. This species winters from the southern United States through northern South America.

### HABITATS

#### Aquatic Habitats

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

#### Woodland Habitats

none

#### Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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