

whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

FEATURES

The whimbrel is about 17-18 inches in length (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). This shorebird has a long bill (two and three-fourths to four inches) that curves downward. Its legs are blue-gray. The back feathers are gray-brown, and white stripes are present on the head. The ventral feathers are white with some brown marks.

BEHAVIORS

The whimbrel migrates through Illinois, but it is more often seen in the Lake Michigan region than any other part of the state. Its call is a short, fast whistling sound. This species breeds in the Arctic. It winters from the southern United States through Chile and Brazil in South America. Spring migrants start arriving in Illinois in April. Fall migrants start returning to the state in July. It eats insects and other small invertebrates that it finds while probing in mud.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Charadriiformes
Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE





Aquatic Habitats

temporary water supplies; Lake Michigan

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none