

white-breasted nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Sittidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The white-breasted nuthatch averages five to six inches in length. It has blue-gray back feathers and white belly feathers. The male has a cap of black feathers while the female has a blue-gray-feathered cap.

BEHAVIORS

The white-breasted nuthatch is a common, permanent resident statewide in Illinois. Nesting takes place from April through May. This bird nests in deciduous woodlands in a knothole in a large tree, an old woodpecker hole or a nest box. The nest is placed 15 to 50 feet above the ground. The nest cavity is lined with grasses, hair, rootlets, sticks and other materials. The female builds the nest. She deposits six to nine white eggs with red-brown spots and incubates them for the 12-day incubation period. One brood is raised per year. The white-breasted nuthatch lives in woodlands, parks and orchards. It searches for food by walking down tree trunks head-first. It eats insects, nuts and acorns.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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