



## cliff swallow

*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*

Kingdom: Animalia  
 Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates  
 Class: Aves  
 Order: Passeriformes  
 Family: Hirundinidae

## FEATURES

An adult cliff swallow is five to six inches in length. Both the male and female are similar in appearance. The area near the base of the tail is buff-colored. The tail is dark and squared. The belly is a dirty, white color while the throat is rust-colored. The head is a metallic, dark blue. There is a cream bar on the face near the base of the bill.

## BEHAVIORS

The cliff swallow is a fairly common migrant and rare summer resident in Illinois. Its winter range is from Panama south to the tip of South America. The cliff swallow lives in open country near water, around cliffs and near lakes. It eats mostly insects. The call is "zayrp" or "chur" or "keerd." This swallow is colonial (stays in large groups all of the time). Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in April. Some cliff swallows nest in Illinois, but most go farther north. Nesting occurs in May and June. Nests are placed on unpainted barns, dams, bridges and other structures. Nests are built in colonies. The juglike nest is made

of mud. Three to six white eggs with dark markings are placed in the nest. Fall migration begins in July. Migration occurs during the day.

## HABITATS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> bottomland forests                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rivers & streams |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> lakes, ponds & reservoirs | <input type="checkbox"/> swamps                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Michigan                        | <input type="checkbox"/> temp water supplies         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> marshes                              | <input type="checkbox"/> wet prairies & fens         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> peatlands                            |  |

## ILLINOIS STATUS

- |  |                                     |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> common | <input type="checkbox"/> endangered | <input type="checkbox"/> threatened |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> native | <input type="checkbox"/> exotic     |                                     |

## ILLINOIS RANGE

Migrant: statewide.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.

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