



eastern phoebe

Sayornis phoebe

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

FEATURES

An adult eastern phoebe is six and one-half to seven inches in length. Both the male and female are similar in appearance. This bird has a gray-brown body and gray tail. Its bill is black. The belly is white.

BEHAVIORS

The eastern phoebe is a common migrant in Illinois. It is an uncommon summer and rare winter resident in the state. This bird normally winters from the southern United States near the Gulf of Mexico through central America. The eastern phoebe lives in forest edges, along streams and at bridges, bluffs and isolated buildings. This bird eats primarily insects but will feed on small fishes and fruit. Its common name comes from its call of "phoe-be" or "fi-bree." The phoebe returns to Illinois in March. The nesting season occurs from late April through early July. Nests are built fairly low to the ground at bridges, bluffs and isolated buildings. Five white eggs are laid. Two broods may be raised in a year. Nests are often parasitized by the brown-

headed cowbird. The cowbird will lay an egg in the nest along with the phoebe eggs. The larger cowbird egg will hatch faster than the phoebe eggs, and this bird will be more aggressive in the nest, taking food from the phoebe young. Fall migration begins in August.

HABITATS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bottomland forests | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rivers & streams |
| <input 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

Summer resident: statewide. Migrant: statewide.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999. *Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume I: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.