



chipping sparrow

Spizella passerina

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Passeriformes
Family: Emberizidae

FEATURES

The chipping sparrow averages five and one-fourth inches in length. When in breeding colors, it has a gray breast, rusty cap and a black line through the eye with a white line over it. The winter colors are not as bright. The immature is browner than the adults and has a light crown stripe and a gray rump.

BEHAVIORS

The chipping sparrow is a common migrant and summer resident statewide. Although it normally winters from the southern United States to South America, it sometimes winters in Illinois. Spring migrants begin arriving in the state in March. Nesting takes place in the period from April through July. The nest is built in evergreens which grow near buildings, or other short- to medium-height trees or vines from one to 25 feet above the ground. The nest of grasses and rootlets is shaped like a cup and lined with hair and grasses. The female builds the nest in three or four days. She lays three or four blue eggs with scattered dark marks. She alone incubates the eggs for the 11- to 14-day incubation period, but the male brings food to her during this time. Two broods are raised in a year. Fall migration commences in August. The chipping sparrow may be

seen in areas of mowed grass, shrubs, well-spaced trees, conifers, orchards, forest edge, thickets, parks and open woods. Its song is a series of "chip" notes. It eats seeds, insects and small fruits.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident:

Summer resident: statewide

Migrant: statewide

Winter resident: statewide

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.

Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.