



mourning dove
Zenaida macroura

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Columbiformes
Family: Columbidae

FEATURES

The mourning dove averages about 12 inches in length. It has a gray-brown body with some dark spots at the base of the wings. The pointed tail has white edging.

BEHAVIORS

The mourning dove is a common migrant and summer resident statewide. It is also a common winter resident statewide. Spring migration into Illinois begins in late April. Nesting occurs from March through September. This bird nests in trees, especially evergreens, about 10 to 25 feet above the ground. The nest is a flimsy-looking platform of sticks. This dove may place its twig nest over an old nest of another bird. Two white eggs are laid by the female. The male (during the day) and the female (at night) incubate for the 13- to 14-day incubation period. Several broods are raised each year. Many doves seen in Illinois in late summer are migrants from farther north. Illinois doves begin migrating in September and winter in Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Texas and Central America. Some doves do overwinter in Illinois. The mourning dove may be found in open habi

tats including shrubs, hedgerows, clover fields, grasslands, orchards, marshes, urban areas and open woods. It makes a “coah, cooo, cooo, coo” sound. This bird feeds on foxtail grass, corn, wheat, crabgrass, prairie grass and other plant materials.

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.