



red-headed woodpecker

Melanerpes erythrocephalus

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Piciformes
Family: Picidae

FEATURES

The red-headed woodpecker averages eight and one-half to nine and one-half inches in length. Its head is entirely red. The back, wings and tail are black. A white, rump patch is present as is a rectangular, white patch on each wing. The immature red-headed woodpecker has a brown head and is generally brown where the adults are black.

BEHAVIORS

The red-headed woodpecker is a common migrant, summer resident and winter resident statewide in Illinois. Spring migration begins in February. Nesting occurs from May through July. The nest is placed in a hole in a live or dead tree or telephone pole or may be placed in a nest box, if one is available. The nest may be located from eight to 80 feet above the ground. Both the male and female excavate the nest. Three to six round, white eggs are laid by the female. The male and female take turns incubating the eggs for the 14-day incubation period. One brood is raised per year. Fall migration begins in August and usually follows waterways. This bird lives in woodland edges, open areas within deciduous and coniferous woodlands and open areas with scattered trees and telephone poles. It makes a "queer" or "queerah" sound. The red-headed woodpecker catches

insects while flying, feeding on the ground and boring into trees. In summer it eats mainly insects while in winter it eats acorns and corn.

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.