



scarlet tanager

Piranga olivacea

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

FEATURES

The scarlet tanager averages seven inches in length. The male has a bright red body with black wings and a black tail. The female, winter male and immature bird are greenish on the back, yellow on the belly and have dark brown wings. The bill is light in color.

BEHAVIORS

The scarlet tanager is a common migrant statewide and an uncommon summer resident, nesting in the northern two-thirds of Illinois. It winters in South America from Columbia and Bolivia to Ecuador and Peru. Spring migrants arrive in Illinois in late April. Nesting takes place from May through August. The woven nest is placed on a horizontal branch, often in an oak or hickory tree, from eight to 75 feet above the ground. The nest is composed of sticks and rootlets and is built by the female. It is lined with plant materials. Three to five green-blue eggs with brown markings are laid by the female, and she incubates them for the 13- to 14-day incubation period. Fall migration begins in August. The scarlet tanager lives in upland and bottomland deciduous forests in the forest interior, coniferous forests and orchards. Its song is like that of the American robin. The chip note is "chip-burr." This bird eats insects and 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: northern 2/3
Migrant: statewide
Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.