



summer tanager

Piranga rubra

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

FEATURES

The summer tanager averages seven to seven and three-fourths inches in length. The male is entirely red except for the light yellow bill. Unlike the similar northern cardinal male, he does not have a head crest. The female is olive-green above and yellow below. The summer tanager does not have wing bars.

BEHAVIORS

The summer tanager is a common migrant and summer resident in the southern one-half of Illinois. It winters from Mexico to South America. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in April. Nesting takes place in June. The nest is built in a tree on a horizontal limb and placed at a height of 10 to 35 feet above the ground. It is made of leaves, grasses, bark and spider silk and lined with grasses. The female does all the nest construction. Three to five blue or greenish eggs with brown marks are laid by the female, and she incubates for the 11- to 12-day incubation period. The male feeds the female while she incubates. One brood is raised per year. Fall migration begins in September. The

summer tanager lives in upland woods, particularly with oaks, bottomland forests, conifers and orchards. Its call is "pit-a-chuck." Its song is similar to those of the American robin and Baltimore oriole. 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: southern 1/2

Migrant: southern 1/2

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.

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