# belted kingfisher
## *Megaceryle alcyon*

## FEATURES

An adult belted kingfisher is 11 to 14 inches in length. The male and female are similar in appearance, except that the female has a rust-colored stripe on the chest. Both sexes have a dark, gray stripe at the top of the chest. The back feathers are blue-gray while the chest and belly feathers are white. The head and bill are large in proportion to body size. The feathers on the top of its head stand up or are "spiked."

## BEHAVIORS

The belted kingfisher is a common migrant in Illinois. It is an uncommon summer and winter resident in the state. The kingfisher winters as far south as northern South America. It lives along or around rivers, streams, ponds and lakes. This bird eats mostly fishes that it catches by hovering over the water and waiting for them to appear. It can plunge head first into the water for a fish. This bird has a rattling call. If open water is present, the kingfisher will overwinter in Illinois. Spring migrants begin to return during February or March. Six to eight white eggs are laid during the nesting season of May through June. The nest is placed in a high bank. The bird may burrow up to 15 feet deep in the bank before constructing the nest.
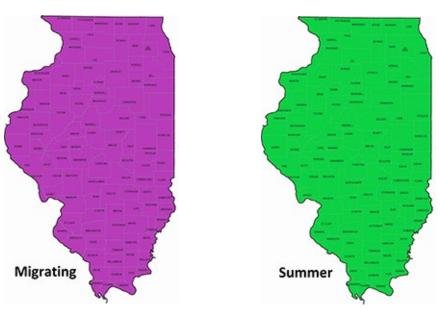
## TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Coraciiformes
Family: Alcedinidae

## ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

## ILLINOIS RANGE

Migrating

Summer

adult female



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**Aquatic Habitats**
lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

**Woodland Habitats**
none

**Prairie and Edge Habitats**