

Cooper's hawk

Accipiter cooperii

FEATURES

The Cooper's hawk averages 14 to 20 inches in length, about the size of the American crow. It has short wings and a long tail. The back has blue-gray feathers, and the chest feathers have red-orange bars. The tail feathers are banded in black and white. The female has a rounded tail in flight and at rest. The male's tail is also rounded, but not as much as that of the female.

BEHAVIORS

The Cooper's hawk is an uncommon migrant and winter resident statewide in Illinois. It is a summer resident statewide, too. Most Cooper's hawks winter in the southern United States or further south into Central America. Spring migrants may be seen in Illinois as early as mid-February. Nesting takes place from April through June. The nest is placed in forested areas. It is built 20 to 60 feet above the ground in the crotch of a deciduous tree or next to the trunk on a limb of a coniferous tree. Both the male and the female build the nest of sticks and line it with bark chips from oak or pine trees. The nest may be built in an old crow or squirrel nest. Two to five white eggs are laid by the female, and both sexes take turns incubating them for the 24- to 36-day incubation period. Fall migration begins in August. This bird lives in woodlands (deciduous and coniferous), hedgerows, bottomland forests and open areas. Its call is "kek, kek, kek." The Cooper's hawk eats birds, small mammals and reptiles.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Accipitriformes
Family: Accipitridae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE



Migrating



Summer



Winter

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juvenile



adult

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none