

# eastern phoebe

## *Sayornis phoebe*

### FEATURES

An adult eastern phoebe is six and one-half to seven inches in length. Both the male and female are similar in appearance. This bird has gray-brown body feathers and gray tail feathers. Its bill is black. The belly feathers are white.

### BEHAVIORS

The eastern phoebe is a common migrant in Illinois. It is an uncommon summer and rare winter resident in the state. This bird normally winters from the southern United States near the Gulf of Mexico through central America. The eastern phoebe lives in forest edges, along streams and at bridges, bluffs and isolated buildings. This species eats primarily insects but will feed on small fishes and fruit. Its common name comes from its call of "phoe-be" or "fi-bree." The phoebe returns to Illinois in March. The nesting season occurs from late April through early July. Nests are built low to the ground at bridges, bluffs and isolated buildings. Five white eggs are laid. Two broods may be raised in a year. Nests are often parasitized by the brown-headed cowbird. The cowbird will lay an egg in the nest along with the phoebe eggs. The larger cowbird egg will hatch faster than the phoebe eggs, and this bird will be more aggressive in the nest, taking food from the phoebe young. Fall migration begins in August.

### TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

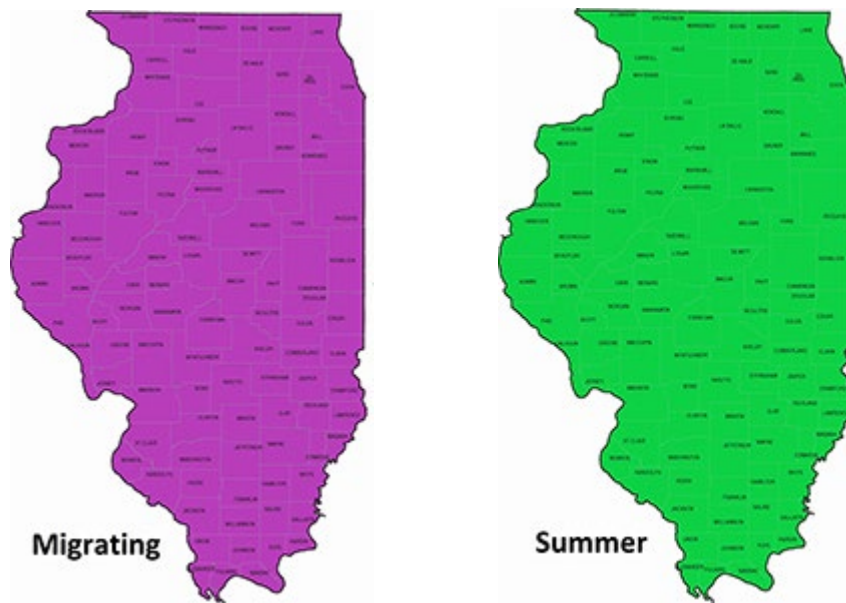
Order: Passeriformes

Family: Tyrannidae

### ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

### ILLINOIS RANGE





adult

© Mary Kay Rubey



### **Aquatic Habitats**

bottomland forests; rivers and streams

### **Woodland Habitats**

bottomland forests; upland deciduous forest

### **Prairie and Edge Habitats**

edge