

eastern screech-owl

Megascops asio

FEATURES

The eastern screech-owl averages seven to 10 inches in length. It has ear tufts. This small owl has two color phases: red and gray.

BEHAVIORS

The eastern screech-owl is a common, permanent resident statewide in Illinois. Nesting takes place from April through May. No nest is built, but the eggs are deposited in a cavity in a hollow tree, an old woodpecker hole, an abandoned building or a nest box, if one is available. The female lays from three to seven white eggs and incubates them herself for the 21- to 30-day incubation period. The eastern screech-owl lives in woodlands, residential areas, city parks and orchards. It may roost in conifers, tree cavities and buildings. Its call is a wavering series of notes that descend in pitch. This owl eats insects, small birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Strigiformes

Family: Strigidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE







gray and red phases

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

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

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none