

killdeer

Charadrius vociferus

FEATURES

An adult killdeer is nine to 11 inches long. Both sexes are similar in appearance. This bird has brown back feathers and two black bands on its white chest. The rust-colored tail feathers are apparent when in flight.

BEHAVIORS

The killdeer is a common migrant through Illinois and a summer resident. It is an uncommon winter resident in southern Illinois. The killdeer lives in fields and lawns, ditches and along the shores of rivers, ponds and lakes. This bird eats ants, beetles, caterpillars, grasshoppers and true bugs. The call of a killdeer is a very loud and distinguishable "kill-deeh." Migration occurs during the day. Spring migrants begin arriving in February. Nesting occurs from March through June. The killdeer nests on the ground in gravel, rocks or short-grass areas. Four tan eggs with black markings are laid. The adult may try to lead an intruder away from the nest by pretending that it is injured (broken-wing trick). Fall migration commences in late June, although some killdeers may still be found in Illinois in January.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Charadriiformes
Family: Charadriidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE





adult at nest



eggs





displaying broken-wing trick



Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; temporary water supplies

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge