

ruby-throated hummingbird

Archilochus colubris

FEATURES

The ruby-throated hummingbird is the smallest bird in eastern North America. It averages three to three and three-quarter inches in length. The male has a red-feathered throat, green-feathered back and a forked tail. The female shows no red and has a blunt tail that is edged with white.

BEHAVIORS

The ruby-throated hummingbird is a common migrant and summer resident statewide. It winters from southern Texas to Central America. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in mid-April. Nesting takes place from May through July. The nest is a cup that is saddled on a limb from 10 to 20 feet above the ground. It is made of plant materials and attached to the limb with spider silk. The nest is lined with plant materials and covered on the outside with lichens. The female builds the nest in about five days. Two white eggs are laid. The female alone incubates for the 14- to 16-day incubation period. Two broods may be raised per year. Fall migrants begin moving through Illinois by August. This bird lives in woodlands, wood edges, weedy areas and gardens. It spends a great deal of time perched on dead branches. The ruby-throated hummingbird is very aggressive, fighting its own species for space and attacking other birds that enter its territory. The male can make a high-pitched note but more often the sound you hear from a hummingbird is made by the wings moving rapidly. This bird eats flower nectar and is particularly attracted to columbine and trumpet vine.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Apodiformes

Family: Trochilidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE



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adult male and female at feeder





nest

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

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

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge