

## sanderling *Calidris alba*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The sanderling is about eight inches in length (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). It is a small, stocky shorebird with a white appearance. The back feathers are light gray, while the ventral feathers are white. A black patch of feathers is present on each shoulder. There is a white stripe on each wing that can be seen when the bird is in flight. Breeding sanderlings have rust-colored feathers on their breast, head and back.

### BEHAVIORS

Sanderlings feed in flocks. They are often seen running toward and then away from waves in the water. They use their bill to probe or peck for small invertebrates. This species breeds in the Arctic. Spring migrants start arriving in Illinois in April. Fall migrants may begin returning to the state in June. They winter in the Hawaiian Islands and from the southern United States through southern South America.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

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

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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