

scarlet tanager

Piranga olivacea

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Passeriformes
Family: Cardinalidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The scarlet tanager averages seven inches in length. The male has bright-red body feathers with black wing and tail feathers. The female, winter male and immature bird have green feathers on the back, yellow feathers on the belly and dark-brown feathers on the wings. The bill is light in color.

BEHAVIORS

The scarlet tanager is a common migrant statewide and an uncommon summer resident, nesting in the northern two-thirds of Illinois. It winters in South America from Columbia and Bolivia to Ecuador and Peru. Spring migrants arrive in Illinois in late April. Nesting takes place from May through August. The woven nest is placed on a horizontal branch, often in an oak or hickory tree, from eight to 75 feet above the ground. The nest is composed of sticks and rootlets and is built by the female. It is lined with plant materials. Three to five green-blue eggs with brown markings are laid by the female, and she incubates them for the 13- to 14-day incubation period. Fall migration begins in August. The scarlet tanager lives in upland and bottomland deciduous forests in the forest interior, coniferous forests and orchards. Its song is like that of the American robin. The chip note is "chip-burr." This bird eats insects and fruits.

ILLINOIS RANGE



female





male

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge