

semipalmated sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

An adult semipalmated sandpiper is five and one-half to six and one-half inches long. Both sexes are similar in appearance. The body has gray feathers with some white coloring. In the summer, this sandpiper has dark body feathers and in the winter it has more white on its body. Its short, wide bill and its legs are black. The toes are partially webbed to help it move in its aquatic habitat.

BEHAVIORS

The semipalmated sandpiper is a common migrant in Illinois. It winters from Florida south to Argentina and Chile. The semipalmated sandpiper may be seen on beaches, mudflats and other open, wet areas. This bird eats mainly insects and mollusks (snails, clams). Its call is "cherk" or "cheh." The birds may be seen migrating through Illinois in April, May or June as they go to their breeding grounds in the Arctic. The return migration begins for adults in July and most immatures in August.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

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

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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