

Smith's longspur *Calcarius pictus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Calcariidae

ILLINOIS STATUS: common, native

FEATURES

Smith's longspur is about six and one-quarter inches in length (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). The two outside feathers on each side of the tail are white. The lower side of the bird is a light red-brown color. The breeding male has a white spot surrounded with black below each eye. The female and nonbreeding male have a few faint streaks on the breast. Some males have a white patch on the edge of the wing.

BEHAVIORS

Smith's longspur migrates through central and southern Illinois and rarely winters in the southern part of the state. Spring migrants begin appearing in Illinois in early March. Fall migration commences through the state in late October. Most of these birds winter in the southeastern part of the Midwest. This species is most often found in patches of grasses and weeds within crop fields during migration. Seeds and insects compose the diet.

Aquatic Habitats: none

Woodland Habitats: none

Prairie and Edge Habitats: edge

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