

## stilt sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The stilt sandpiper is about eight and one-half inches long (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). In spring it shows bars on the ventral feathers and a red patch of feathers on the cheek. The nonbreeding bird has gray feathers on the back and white feathers on the ventral side. There is a white line over the eye and long, green legs. The long bill droops very slightly downward. It has a hump-backed appearance when it flies. A white rump patch can be seen when the bird is in flight.

### BEHAVIORS

This species breeds in the Arctic and winters in South America. Spring migrants start returning to Illinois in April. Birds passing through after nesting may appear in Illinois as early as June. The stilt sandpiper wades in water as deep as its belly to probe mud with its bill, even placing the entire head under water. It feeds on small, aquatic invertebrates.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

**temporary water supplies; rivers and streams**

Woodland Habitats

**none**

Prairie and Edge Habitats

**none**

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