

upland sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS endangered, native

FEATURES

The upland sandpiper is also known as the upland plover. This bird averages 11 to 12 inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). It has mottled brown feathers above and on the throat, with white feathers on the lower side. The small head has a short bill and a dark eye. The tail is long. The yellow legs are a distinctive feature.

BEHAVIORS

The upland sandpiper is an uncommon migrant and summer resident throughout Illinois. It lives in prairies, pastures, hay fields, red clover fields, fallow fields and grasslands adjacent to airfields. Spring migrants begin arriving in early to mid-April. Eggs are produced from mid-May through June. In Illinois, nesting occurs in the northern and central parts of the state. The nest is built in a hollow in the ground. This hollow is lined with grasses or leaves and hidden by grasses arched over its top. Three or four, tan eggs with brown spots are laid by the female. The male and female alternate incubation duties over the 21-day, incubation period. Fall migration begins in July. The upland sandpiper winters as far south as central Argentina and Uruguay. It eats insects, worms, small crustaceans and other small aquatic animals. It makes “kip-ip-ip-ip” or “whooooleeeeeee” sounds.

The upland sandpiper is endangered in Illinois. It was once a very common resident of the state. However, it was hunted nearly to extinction before it was given protection in the early 1900s. The continued loss and fragmentation of grassland habitat threaten this species’ survival in Illinois. Preservation and proper management of large grassland areas are required management tools.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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