

Wilson's phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Charadriiformes

Family: Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Phalaropes have lobed toes that help them swim and wade in water. When swimming, they often spin. The female is larger than the male. The wings do not have stripes. The white rump is visible in flight. In breeding plumage, the female has a black stripe through the eye and onto the neck that shades into a rust-colored mark. The male has a similar pattern but is much duller. The nonbreeding bird is gray above and white below with a white eyestripe. The bill is thin. Legs are green or dark yellow.

BEHAVIORS

Wilson's phalarope is a rare migrant through the state and a rare summer resident in northern Illinois. Spring migrants begin arriving in late March. Southbound migrants start appearing in late June. Overwintering occurs in western South America. The birds can be found at mudflats, marshes and shorelines, where they eat small invertebrates and plankton. Nests are placed on wet prairies and marshes.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; marshes; temporary water supplies

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2020. Biodiversity of Illinois.