

wood thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Turdidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The wood thrush averages eight inches in length. It has brown back feathers with rust-red head feathers. The white belly feathers have dark, round spots. The immature thrush has brown head feathers.

BEHAVIORS

The wood thrush is a common migrant and summer resident statewide. It winters from south Texas to northern South America. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in late April. Nesting takes place from May through July. The nest is placed from six to 50 feet above the ground in a tree. It is made of grasses, bark and other plant materials mixed with mud and lined with rootlets. The female completes nest construction in about five days. Three to four blue or blue-green eggs are deposited and incubated by the female for 13 days. The male guards the nest while the female is off of it. Two broods are raised each year. Nests are often parasitized by the brown-headed cowbird that deposits an egg that the wood thrush will hatch and raise, taking food and care away from its own young. Fall migration begins in September. The wood thrush lives in bottomland forests and wooded ravines on river bluffs. It has a flutelike song that may be heard as it sings at dawn and dusk. Its call notes are a series of "pits." This bird stays on or near the ground, eating insects, millipedes and fruits.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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