

Illinois Wood-warblers



mourning warbler *Geothlypis philadelphia*

FEATURES

The mourning warbler is about five and one-fourth inches long (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). Its back feathers are olive-green. The head and neck feathers are gray. Belly feathers are yellow. The male has a black patch of feathers between the gray and yellow coloration on the ventral side. Female and immature birds of this species may have a thin, white eye ring. Some females in breeding coloration and most nonbreeding birds show yellow feathers instead of gray on the throat.

BEHAVIORS

The mourning warbler stays near the ground in woods and thickets. Its song sounds like a repeated "cheery-cherry" and is variable. Some of these birds nest in northern Illinois. Spring migrants begin arriving in Illinois in late April. Fall migrants begin appearing in the state in August. In fall the birds are often seen in fence rows, plant patches in open areas and bottomland forests. This species winters from Central America to northern South America. It eats insects and may consume small fruits in the fall.

