

common snipe

Gallinago gallinago

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Aves
Order:	Charadriiformes
Family:	Scolopacidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native



photo provided by Dennis_Jacobsen/pond5.com

FEATURES

The common snipe averages 11 inches in length (tail tip to bill tip in preserved specimen). Its bill is very long in relation to its body size. The brown back has lighter brown stripes. Stripes are also present on the head. The long, green legs and short, orange tail are also distinctive.

BEHAVIORS

The common snipe is a common migrant and rare summer resident throughout Illinois and an uncommon winter resident in southern Illinois. It may be found in open wet spots, mudflats, wet fields and roadside ditches. The call is “scaip,” and it is made while in flight. Spring migrants may arrive in Illinois as early as February. The breeding season occurs from late April through May. The snipe courtship flight is called “winnowing.” In it, the birds perform acrobatics while flying. The snipe nests on the ground in wet, grassy areas. The nest is made of grasses. The female deposits four, brown eggs with black marks. Incubation is done solely by the female over the 18- to 20-day incubation period, but the male does help care for the young. Fall migrants begin arriving in Illinois in June. The common snipe may winter in Illinois if open water is available. This bird probes mud with its long bill, feeding on earthworms, insects and some plants.

adult feeding



photo provided by Dennis_Jacobsen/pond5.com

ILLINOIS RANGE



Aquatic Habitats

temporary water supplies; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge