



catch and swallow, including insects, crayfish, fishes, birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals. It also does some scavenging and eats vegetation.

HABITATS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> bottomland forests | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rivers & streams |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> lakes, ponds & reservoirs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> swamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> temp water supplies |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> marshes | <input type="checkbox"/> wet prairies & fens |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> peatlands | |

ILLINOIS STATUS

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> common | <input type="checkbox"/> endangered | <input type="checkbox"/> threatened |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> native | <input type="checkbox"/> exotic | |

ILLINOIS RANGE

statewide

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999. *Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume I: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.

snapping turtle

Chelydra serpentina

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Reptilia
Order: Testudines
Family: Chelydridae

FEATURES

The snapping turtle is eight to 12 inches long and weighs 10 to 35 pounds. It has an enormous head, thick legs and a long tail which is saw-toothed on the upper side. The carapace (top of shell) has three weak keels (ridges) that often have algae growing on them. The plastron (bottom of shell) is small. This turtle is unable to withdraw completely into its shell. The young turtle is black with some gray or olive spots. The adult is olive, gray or black.

BEHAVIORS

This turtle is found in any permanent body of water. Although aquatic, this species is often encountered on land as it migrates from one body of water to another. The animal is very aggressive out of water and will attempt to bite. In water, it is calmer. It spends much of its time on the bottom of a water body waiting for prey items to come close. It buries itself in the mud in winter, often near other snapping turtles. The mating season lasts from April through November, although most mating occurs in late spring. The female digs a nest in soil in early June and deposits 20 to 30 eggs. Eggs hatch in September and October. The snapping turtle eats most anything it can