



with venom then waits for it to succumb before eating it. The copperhead eats mice, small birds, lizards, snakes, amphibians and insects.

## HABITATS

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

## ILLINOIS STATUS

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

## ILLINOIS RANGE

southern 1/3

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

## copperhead

*Agkistrodon contortrix*

Kingdom: Animalia  
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates  
Class: Reptilia  
Order: Squamata  
Family: Viperidae

## FEATURES

The copperhead averages 24 to 36 inches in length. It has a heat-sensitive pit on each side of the head between the eye and the nostril. The head is flattened and much wider than the neck. The pupil of its eye is vertically elliptical. Scales are weakly keeled (ridged). This snake's coloration is as follows: copper-colored head; red-brown or yellowish-brown body; hour-glass markings across the back when viewed from above.

## BEHAVIORS

The copperhead lives in rocky, wooded hillsides, abandoned sawdust piles and swamps. This snake is active during the day in spring and fall, becoming nocturnal in the hottest summer months. When disturbed it will attempt to run away. If trapped, it rapidly vibrates the tip of the tail, making a noise against whatever the tail hits. This snake may be found in groups, particularly in fall when moving to hibernating dens. Mating occurs in the spring. The female gives birth to a brood of between one and 14 young in August or September. Each female may produce young only every other year. This venomous snake injects prey