



into their gastrovascular cavity for digestion. Hydras eat other small invertebrates, such as microscopic crustaceans and worms.

## HABITATS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> bottomland forests                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rivers & streams |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> lakes, ponds & reservoirs | <input 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"/> native | <input type="checkbox"/> exotic     |                                     |

## ILLINOIS RANGE

statewide

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

## hydra

representative species

Kingdom: Animalia  
Division/Phylum: Cnidaria - hydras  
Class: Hydrozoa  
Order:  
Family:

## FEATURES

Hydras are less than one-half inch tall. Their saclike body is made of two layers of cells. They have radial symmetry, with tentacles surrounding the single opening of the gastrovascular cavity. Stinging cells are present on the tentacles. The body may be gray, brown, white or green.

## BEHAVIORS

Hydras live attached to submerged vegetation, leaves or rocks in clear waters of ponds, lagoons, rivers and lakes. They move in two ways: by somersaulting and by an inch-worm type of movement. They reproduce both sexually and asexually. Most are hermaphrodites, producing eggs and sperm but at different times. The fertilized eggs are covered with a shell-like cyst before being released to the water in the fall. The cysts overwinter, and new hydra hatch in the spring. Asexually, they reproduce by budding. Hydras use stinging cells in their tentacles to inject a toxin into prey items that touch them. The toxin paralyzes the prey swiftly, which is necessary because the hydra could not follow it to catch it. Hydras use tentacles to draw prey