



silvery salamander

Ambystoma platineum

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Amphibia
Order: Caudata
Family: Ambystomatidae

FEATURES

The silvery salamander may be found as a native population in Vermilion County (east central Illinois) and an introduced population in Cook County. This salamander averages four to six inches in length. The body is brown, gray or blue-black. Blue flecks may be present on the lower body.

BEHAVIORS

The native colony of silvery salamanders in Vermilion County lives in a wooded upland and an adjacent ravine. Breeding occurs in a nearby vernal pool that dries out in mid-to-late summer or earlier. The silvery salamander spends most of the time underground except for a short period when mating occurs. It is an all female, triploid species containing two sets of chromosomes derived from the Jefferson salamander and one from the blue-spotted salamander. To activate egg development, the female mates with a male of a different species (small-mouthed salamander), but the sperm makes no genetic contribution

to the offspring. Eggs are deposited in water and attached to vegetation. Young salamanders transform into the adult, land-based form in summer. This animal eats invertebrates.

HABITATS

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

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

The native silvery salamander population has only one known breeding pond, which is often too shallow and does not hold water long enough for successful reproduction. The population is protected by a nature preserve.

ILLINOIS RANGE

east central Illinois and Cook County

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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