



mink

Mustela vison

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Carnivora
Family: Mustelidae

FEATURES

The adult mink has a head-body length of 12 to 17 inches and a tail five to nine inches long. The body is red-brown with the belly being a little lighter. The fluffy tail is progressively darker toward the tip, so that the last one-half to one-third is all black. The mink has small ears. The toes have webbing at the bases.

BEHAVIORS

The mink may be found statewide in Illinois, living in areas with permanent water. This mammal feeds on birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects, fishes, muskrats, mice, cottontails, crayfish and voles. It may take over the house or bank burrow of a muskrat to use as its own shelter or live under a stump or in a brush pile. The mink is mainly active at night. This animal moves equally well in water and on land. Mating occurs from January through April. Most young are born in April and May. The gestation period is variable and determined by when the fertilized eggs implant and begin development in the uterus. Litter size is three to six. Young are born helpless. They are able to live on their own at an age of about two months.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: statewide

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.