



river cooter

Pseudemys concinna

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata
Class: Reptilia
Order: Testudines
Family: Emydidae

FEATURES

The river cooter is about nine to 13 inches long. It has a "c" marking on certain scutes (plates) of the dark carapace (upper shell) along with yellow circular markings throughout the upper shell. The carapace is usually flattened. The male has long claws on the front feet. The head is striped.

BEHAVIORS

The river cooter may be found in several southern Illinois counties including Alexander, Franklin, Gallatin and White. It lives in sloughs and oxbows along major rivers, particularly those with plentiful aquatic plants. This turtle is aquatic but will leave the water to bask on logs. It feeds in the early morning and late afternoon. During May or June the female deposits about 20 eggs in a nest she digs in soil. Hatching occurs in August or September. This turtle eats vegetation, crustaceans, mollusks (snails, slug and others) and insects.

HABITATS

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: Ohio and Wabash rivers border counties

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.

Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.