



worm snake

Carphophis amoenus

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata
Class: Reptilia
Order: Squamata
Family: Colubridae

FEATURES

The worm snake averages seven and one-half to eleven inches in length. It has a sharp spur on the end of the tail. The back is brown, and the belly is pink. The body is slick with smooth scales. The head is pointed.

BEHAVIORS

The worm snake may be found along the middle Mississippi River border counties, the Wabash River border counties and the remaining southern one-fourth of Illinois. This snake lives in bluffs, rock outcrops, dead trees and moist ground in wooded areas. The worm snake is almost never found in the open. It is frequently discovered under rocks or boards, in rotting logs or in the soil. It moves far underground in dry weather. This snake uses a spur on the end of its tail as a defense against predators. It may breed in spring or fall. One to six eggs are deposited in soil or under rocks in June or July. Eggs hatch in August. The worm snake eats earthworms and soft-bodied insects.

HABITATS

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: middle Mississippi River + Wabash River border counties + southern 1/4

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.

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