



Mississippi green water snake

Nerodia cyclopion

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

FEATURES

The Mississippi green water snake averages 30 to 45 inches in length. A row of scales is present between the eye and the lip scales. The back is green or brown with dim, black crossbars. The belly has light spots on a gray or brown background. Scales are keeled (ridged). The female is larger than the male.

BEHAVIORS

The Mississippi green water snake may be found only in Union County in Illinois, although historically it was in Alexander County, also. This snake lives in cypress swamps and river sloughs. The Mississippi green water snake is aquatic but is often seen basking on logs or brush. It is active during the day, hunting for food in late evening. In the hottest summer temperatures, it becomes active at night. It may flatten its body when disturbed and/or release large amounts of nasty-smelling musk from glands at the base of the tail. Mating occurs in the spring. Eggs are retained inside the female, where they develop. Young are born alive in August or September, the number of young varying with the age and size of the female snake. This animal eats fishes and amphibians.

HABITATS

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: southwestern Mississippi River border counties

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.

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