



## Graham's crayfish snake

*Regina grahamii*

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

### FEATURES

Graham's crayfish snake averages 18 to 28 inches in length. Its back is brown or dark olive, and a broad, yellow stripe is present along each lower side. The belly is yellow and may or may not have markings. The scales are keeled (ridged).

### BEHAVIORS

Graham's crayfish snake may be found throughout Illinois except in those counties which border the Wabash and Ohio rivers. This snake lives in ponds, streams, sloughs, swamps and marshes. Graham's crayfish snake is semi-aquatic. It hides under stones or debris along the water's edge and sometimes in crayfish burrows or other burrows. It basks on rocks and in branches overhanging the water. It is active in the day except in the hot summer months when it becomes nocturnal. This snake may flatten its body when disturbed and/or release large amounts of nasty-smelling musk from glands at the base of the tail. It overwinters in crayfish burrows. Mating occurs in spring. The female gives birth to from nine to 40 young in late summer, the number depending on her size and age. Graham's crayfish snake mainly eats crayfish that have just shed their exoskeleton but will also take other crustaceans, amphibians and fishes.

### 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.