



eastern ribbon snake

Thamnophis sauritus

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

FEATURES

The eastern ribbon snake averages 18 to 26 inches in length. Its very slender body has three, yellow, longitudinal stripes on a dark background. The belly is yellow or green. The tail comprises almost one-third of the total body length. The scales are keeled (ridged).

BEHAVIORS

The eastern ribbon snake may be found in the southern tip of Illinois. This reptile lives in and around streams, ponds and swamps which have quiet, shallow water, much vegetation and plenty of sunlight. The eastern ribbon snake is semiaquatic, spending time on land and in water. When alarmed, it may flatten its body and release an unpleasant musk from glands at the base of its tail. The female gives birth to from three to 25 young in late summer, depending on her size and age. This snake eats salamanders, frogs and small fishes.

HABITATS

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: southern tip

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2006.

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