



## stomach worm

*Physaloptera spp.*

Kingdom: Animalia  
Division/Phylum: Nematoda  
Class:  
Order:  
Family:

## FEATURES

This roundworm is a large, robust, coiled, stomach worm of the opossum, raccoon, skunk, fox, dog, cat and many birds. Its long, unsegmented, cylindrical body is tapered at the ends. The male is about five-eighths to one and one-half inches long while the female is three-fourths to two inches in length.

## BEHAVIORS

This roundworm lives as an adult in the stomach of its host. It produces eggs containing larvae that are passed out of the body of the host in its feces. The eggs must be eaten by certain insects (beetles, cockroaches, crickets) for the cycle to continue. The insects ingesting these eggs become infective to the host, should the host eat one. If the infected insect is eaten by a mouse, small reptile or amphibian, it may store the larvae and pass them on to the definitive host, if it becomes a prey item for one. This worm may cause small erosions of the host's stomach lining when attaching to the stomach wall.

## 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.