

cave salamander *Eurycea lucifuga*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Caudata

Family: Plethodontidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The cave salamander averages four to six inches in length. The body color is red or red-orange, and it has black spots scattered over the back and sides. The tail is very long relative to its body length. The belly is yellow and usually plain.

BEHAVIORS

The cave salamander may be found in the southern tip of Illinois. It lives in caves and spring-fed cypress swamps. This salamander is nocturnal. It is slippery and quick. It may wave its tail to distract predators. Breeding occurs in the spring and fall. Each female may deposit 50 to 90 eggs in water. Larvae take one to two years to transform to the adult form. The cave salamander eats small arthropods (spiders, insects, mites and others).

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie Habitats

none

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