

queensnake *Regina septemvittata*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Natricidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The queensnake averages 15 to 24 inches in length. It has a brown back and a yellow stripe along each lower side of the body. The belly is yellow with four brown stripes. The scales are keeled (ridged).

BEHAVIORS

The queensnake may be found in the northeastern one-fourth of Illinois. This snake lives in creeks and rivers in forested regions. Although aquatic, it may take cover under rocks or brush along the water's edge. The queensnake may flatten its body when disturbed and/or release large amounts of bad-smelling musk from glands at the base of the tail. Mating occurs in spring. The female gives birth to from five to 20 young in late summer, the number depending upon her size and age. The queensnake eats mainly crayfish, especially those that have just shed their exoskeleton.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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