

river cooter *Pseudemys concinna*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Testudines

Family: Emydidae

ILLINOIS STATUS endangered, native

FEATURES

The river cooter is about nine to thirteen inches long. It has a "C" marking on certain scutes (plates) of the dark carapace (upper shell) along with yellow circular markings throughout the upper shell. The carapace is usually flattened. The male has long claws on the front feet. The head is striped.

BEHAVIORS

The river cooter lives in sloughs and oxbows along major rivers, particularly those with plentiful aquatic plants. This turtle is aquatic but will leave the water to bask on logs. It feeds in the early morning and late afternoon. During May or June the female deposits about 20 eggs in a nest she digs in soil. Hatching occurs in August or September. This turtle eats vegetation, crustaceans, mollusks (snails, slug and others) and insects.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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