

silvery salamander *Ambystoma platineum*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Caudata

Family: Ambystomatidae

ILLINOIS STATUS endangered, native

FEATURES

The silvery salamander averages four to six inches in length. The body is brown, gray or blue-black. Blue flecks may be present on the lower body.

BEHAVIORS

The silvery salamander may be found as a native population in Vermilion County (east central Illinois) and an introduced population in Cook County. The native colony in Vermilion County lives in a wooded upland and an adjacent ravine. Breeding occurs in a nearby vernal pool that dries out in mid-to-late summer or earlier. The silvery salamander spends most of the time underground except for a short period when mating occurs. This salamander is an all female, triploid species containing two sets of chromosomes derived from the Jefferson salamander and one from the blue-spotted salamander. To activate egg development, the female mates with a male of a different species (small-mouthed salamander), but the sperm makes no genetic contribution to the offspring. Eggs are deposited in water and attached to vegetation. Young salamanders transform into the adult, land-based form in summer. This animal eats invertebrates.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; temporary water supplies

Woodland Habitats

upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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