

swamp

RECREATION

canoeing, fishing, hiking, hunting, trapping, wildlife observation and/or photography

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

The swamp communities in Illinois are in the extreme southern portion of the state. These areas are the northernmost remnants of a vast network of swamps that once covered much of the southern United States. Two beautiful swamps that may be visited are located at the La Rue Swamp Nature Preserve in Union County and Heron Pond-Little Black Slough Nature Preserve in Johnson County.



CHARACTERISTICS

Surface water is usually present in a swamp. There is a canopy cover of more than 30 percent of the area (often exceeding 80 percent) of tall, woody vegetation. More than 50 percent of the vegetation is woody, adapted to living in water and more than 20 feet tall. Cypress and tupelo swamps have a water depth of about two feet.

WHAT LIVES HERE?

Many organisms living in Illinois swamps are at the northern edge of their range and are unique to the extreme southern portion of the state. An abundance of species may be found in this productive habitat. Plants like the bald cypress, water tupelo, swamp white oak, swamp rose and duckweeds are common. Herons, waterfowl, the black vulture, the red-shouldered hawk, the barred owl, flycatchers, warblers, squirrels, bats, foxes, mink, muskrat, beaver, cottontail, swamp rabbit, bobcat, river otter, frogs, turtles, snakes and many more species live here.