

## American badger *Taxidea taxus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Carnivora

Family: Mustelidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The badger has a head-body length of 18 to 22 inches and a four- to six-inch long tail. The wide body has short legs. The body hairs are gold at the base, black in the middle and white at the tips giving a gray appearance to the animal. Its short tail is the same color as its back. There are white markings on its face from the eyes to the ears. A white stripe can be seen from its nose to the middle of its back. The belly is white or tan. Long claws are present on the front feet.

### BEHAVIORS

The badger may be found in the northern two-thirds of Illinois. It lives in open areas like pastures, roadsides, along railroad tracks, brushy areas and alfalfa fields. The badger feeds on cottontails, woodchucks, ground squirrels, mice, plains pocket gophers and voles. It is usually a nocturnal animal. The badger can dig quickly and powerfully. It digs to find food and to make temporary shelters. It makes sounds such as grunts, squeals and hisses. Mating occurs in summer. The fertilized eggs do not implant in the uterus immediately to develop, so the gestation period is long. Young are born in March and April. Litter size varies from one to five young. Young are helpless at birth but develop rapidly and are able to live on their own in about three months.

### HABITATS

#### Aquatic Habitats

none

#### Woodland Habitats

none

#### Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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