

coyote *Canis latrans*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Carnivora

Family: Canidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The coyote has a 32- to 37-inch long body, 11- to 16-inch tail and weighs 20 to 40 pounds. The color of the back fur is variable but is usually gray or red-gray with a partial black stripe in the middle. The belly fur is a cream-gray color. The pointed ears are shaded red on the back. The fluffy tail has a black tip.

BEHAVIORS

The coyote may be found statewide in Illinois. This carnivore lives in woodlands, wooded bluffs and prairies. It eats mice, rabbits, fruits and carrion. It makes “yip-yap” sounds. The tail is held between its back legs as it runs. Mating occurs in February with young born in April. The same pair may mate for more than one year. Litter size varies, but six or seven young are typically born to a female. Young are born and reared in a burrow or den. The male brings food to the female and pups. When the young are able to eat solid food (about six weeks after birth), the adults may regurgitate partially digested food for them.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; marshes; peatlands; swamps; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

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

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