

southern bog lemming *Synaptomys cooperi*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Rodentia

Family: Cricetidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The southern bog lemming (head-body length three to four inches) has dark fur that is tinted red on its back. The belly fur is a lighter version of the back fur with silver tips on the fur. The tail is short and about the same length as its back foot. The tail is dark above and light below. The upper incisors are wide, grooved and orange.

BEHAVIORS

In Illinois, the southern bog lemming may be found in all but the northeastern one-fourth of the state. It lives in areas of moist, dense grasses, particularly blue grass. This rodent feeds on berries, blue grass and other green vegetation. It is active during the day and night. The southern bog lemming builds burrows and surface runways. It makes some sounds and is known to swim. Mating probably occurs throughout the year with most activity in the fall. The gestation period is slightly more than three weeks. Litter size varies from one to eight. Young are born helpless but develop rapidly. They are able to live on their own at about two weeks of age.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge; hill prairie

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