

woodland box turtle *Terrapene Carolina*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Testudines

Family: Emydidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The woodland box turtle averages four and one-half to six inches in length. Its high, domelike carapace (upper shell) has a varied color pattern of yellow, orange or olive on a dark background. The female's eyes are brown while the male's eyes are red, making it easy to tell the sexes apart. This turtle has four toes on each hind foot, a short tail and a hinged plastron (lower shell) that allows the animal to completely enclose itself in the shell.

BEHAVIORS

The woodland box turtle may be found in the southern one-half of Illinois. It has also been introduced by humans into urban areas in other parts of the state. This reptile lives in woodlands, fields, field edges and mud holes. The woodland box turtle is mainly terrestrial but may spend time in water or buried in mud during the summer. It buries itself in soil or mud in winter. Mating may occur in the spring or fall. The female deposits three to eight eggs in a nest in soil during June or July, often at the edge of a woodland. Hatching occurs by September. This turtle eats fungi, fruits and invertebrates.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; lakes, ponds and reservoirs; marshes; peatlands; rivers and streams; swamps; temporary water supplies; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

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

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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