

Best Management Practices

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION



Illinois Mud Turtle

Kinosternon flavescens spooneri

Common name • Illinois Mud Turtle

Scientific name • *Kinosternon flavescens spooneri*

State status • Endangered

Ecology

Illinois mud turtles range throughout the sand prairie region along the Illinois River, the Oquawka sand area in Illinois and into northeastern Missouri and southeastern Iowa. In Missouri, they occur in natural marshes, oxbow lakes, muddy sloughs and ponds. They also may be found in flooded fields associated with sandy soil. Illinois mud turtles are active for approximately 100 days during the warm season, with peaks of activity from April to mid-June and September to mid-October. During the winter and hot summer months when they are inactive, they bury themselves in loose sand 10 inches or so below the ground. Illinois mud turtles typically move into aquatic areas for feeding, where they prey on snails, insects, fish, crayfish and mussels. Breeding likely occurs between April and mid-May. Females lay 4-6 eggs in nests near water on sandy slopes with scattered vegetation. Young hatch in September and may remain in the nest until the following spring.

Reasons for Decline

Historical records indicate the Illinois mud turtle was never common nor widespread in Missouri. However, destruction of wetlands and swamps for agriculture and urbanization projects may eliminate habitat for these turtles. In addition, degradation of remaining habitat because of non-point source pollution and alteration of water regimes continue to threaten the status of the Illinois mud turtle in Missouri.

Specific Recommendations

Protection and restoration of wetlands is critical for the survival of many species, including the Illinois mud turtle.

→ Avoid removing or destroying unique habitat features, such as downed trees, that provide habitat for the Illinois mud turtle.

→ Draining or destroying known wetland habitat should be avoided.

→ Erosion and sediment controls should be implemented, maintained and monitored for the duration of the project.

→ Disposal of wastes and garbage should be done in designated areas far from wetlands.

→ Avoid building dams and impoundment structures within the range of the Illinois mud turtle.

→ Avoid altering water levels and regimes in marshes and wetlands within the range of the Illinois mud turtle.

General Recommendations

→ Refer to Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Wetlands and Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Streams and Rivers.

→ Refer also to Amphibian and Reptile Management Guidelines.

Information Contacts

For further information regarding regulations for development in wetlands, rivers and streams, contact:

Missouri Department of Conservation
Policy Coordination Section
P.O. Box 180
2901 W. Truman Blvd
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
Telephone: 573/751-4115

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Division of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
Telephone: 573/526-3315

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Regulatory Branch
700 Federal Building
Kansas City, MO 64106-2896
Telephone: 816/983-3990

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101
Telephone: 913/551-7307

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
608 E. Cherry Street, Room 200
Columbia, MO 65201
Telephone: 573/876-1911

Disclaimer

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