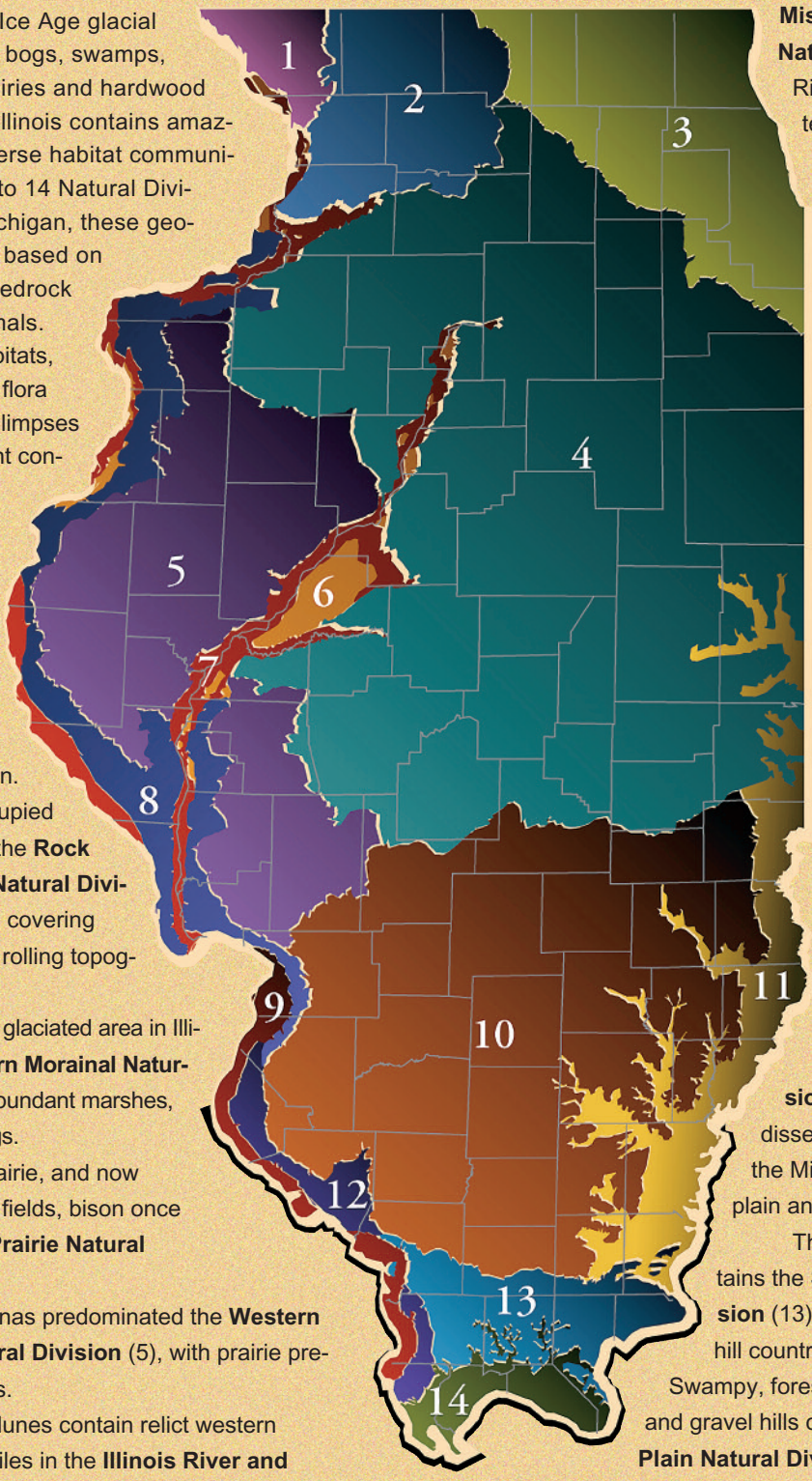
From a grand prairie to a coastal plain, Illinois' landscape is perfectly natural.

Naturally Illinois

From pre-Ice Age glacial relicts to bogs, swamps, sand prairies and hardwood forests, Illinois contains amazingly diverse habitat communities. Categorized into 14 Natural Divisions, plus Lake Michigan, these geographic regions are based on topography, soils, bedrock and plants and animals.

These unique habitats, and their associated flora and fauna, present glimpses into the presettlement conditions of Illinois.



The **Wisconsin Driftless Natural Division** (1) is characterized by rugged terrain that apparently escaped Pleistocene glaciation.

Prairies once occupied the level uplands of the **Rock River Hill Country Natural Division** (2), with forests covering the remainder of the rolling topography.

The most recently glaciated area in Illinois, the **Northeastern Morainal Natural Division** (3) has abundant marshes, natural lakes and bogs.

Once tallgrass prairie, and now primarily agricultural fields, bison once roamed the **Grand Prairie Natural Division** (4).

Forest and savannas predominated the **Western Forest-Prairie Natural Division** (5), with prairie present on level uplands.

Sand areas and dunes contain relict western amphibians and reptiles in the **Illinois River and Mississippi River Sand Areas Natural Division** (6).

River bottomlands and backwater lakes are distinctive features in the **Upper Mississippi River and Illinois River Bottomlands Natural Division** (7).

Hill prairies and forest make up the narrow band of river bluffs in the **Middle Mississippi Border Natural Division** (8).

The **Lower Mississippi River Bottomlands Natural Division** (9) once included prairies, marshes and rich forests with several southern lowland tree species.

High clay soils, streamside forests and prairies characterize the **Southern Till Plain Natural Division** (10).

The **Wabash Border Natural Division** (11) includes the bottomlands and the loess-covered uplands bordering the Wabash River.

The **Ozark Natural Division** (12) consists of a mature, dissected plateau with bluffs along the Mississippi River, a sinkhole plain and hill prairies.

The southern tip of Illinois contains the **Shawnee Hills Natural Division** (13), mostly forested, unglaciated hill country.

Swampy, forested bottomlands and low clay and gravel hills can be found in the **Coastal Plain Natural Division** (14).

(Illustration by Loren Kirkwood, Illinois Natural History Survey.)