GLOSSARY

abundant – more than enough; plentiful

There was an abundant supply of nuts for the squirrels to eat.

adaptable or adapt – able to adjust to new conditions or surroundings

River otters reintroduced from Louisiana had to adapt to their new surroundings.

appendages – the "hands" and "feet" of an animal; in the case of mammals, usually paws or hooves

The raccoon used its appendages to catch a crayfish.

burrow – a tunnel or system of tunnels dug underground by an animal and used for a home

The badger lives in a burrow in the soil.

camouflage – a disguise or false appearance that is used to hide something

The mink's dark fur camouflages it at night when it hunts for prey.

canines – teeth located on either side of the incisors, in one or both jaws, used for stabbing and tearing

The long canines of the coyote help it to capture mice and other prey.

carnivore – any animal that eats only the flesh of other animals

The bobcat is a carnivore, catching and eating squirrels, mice and other species.

conservation – the protection and wise use of the forests, rivers, animals, minerals and other natural resources

Conservation of our natural resources is important so that wild mammals can continue to exist.

critical temperature – the temperature at which a hibernating mammal will automatically waken (varies from species to species)

A thirteen-lined ground squirrel will awaken from hibernation when the air in its burrow reaches a critical temperature.

den – a hollowed chamber or space used as a home by an animal

Fox young are born and raised in a den.

diurnal – of or occurring during the day

Squirrels are diurnal animals, active throughout the daylight hours year round.

domestic – not wild; tame

Pets are considered to be domestic animals.

dormancy – a condition of inactivity or sleep

Skunks use dormancy to help protect them when the outside temperature is very cold.

echolocation – a technique of sound and hearing used by bats to navigate in the dark

Bats use echolocation to help them navigate and locate prey in the dark.

endangered – threatened with danger of extinction

The Indiana bat is an endangered mammal in Illinois.

environment – the surroundings in which an organism lives

A good environment helped the mammal species to survive.

extinction – the elimination of a species

The rate of species extinction has been increased by the actions of humans.

extirpated or extirpation – the elimination of a species from a portion of its historic range

The porcupine has been extirpated from Illinois.

food chain – the route of energy flow through a community of organisms

The transfer of energy from sun to plant to grasshopper to white-footed mouse is an example of a food chain.

gestation period – the length of time a mammal develops inside the mother's body prior to birth

The gestation period for the white-tailed deer is about 210 days.

habitat – the natural environment in which living things can thrive

Woodlands and forest edges are the preferred habitats for the fox squirrel.

habitat fragmentation – separation of areas of natural habitat by agricultural or urban development

Construction for the new highway caused habitat fragmentation of the forest.

herbivore – any animal that eats only plants

The white-tailed deer is an herbivore.

hibernation – a state of reduced metabolism, like a very deep sleep, which allows an animal to survive periods of food scarcity

Hibernation is used by the thirteen-lined ground squirrel as a survival technique in winter.

home range – a large area of land on which animals live

The home range of a white-tailed deer can cover many square miles.

incisors – teeth located in the front and center of one or both jaws, used for holding, cutting or gnawing

A beaver's strong incisors let it gnaw tree bark.

insectivore – any animal that eats only insects

Insectivores, such as the northern short-tailed shrew, feed on insects.

instinctive behavior – an inborn, automatic response or behavior pattern

Instinctive behavior by mammals does not have to be learned.

learned behavior – behavior acquired through imitation and play

Learned behavior comes from watching or playing with other members of a mammal's species.

limbs – the "arms" and "legs" of an animal

The front limbs of a bat are modified for flying.

GLOSSARY

mammals – animals having these five characteristics: hair or fur; warm-blooded; usually born alive; young are fed milk produced by the mother; a more complex brain than other animals

Mammals include bats, mice, squirrels and many other species.

mammary glands – special organs in female mammals that produce milk to feed the young

A young mammal feeds on milk from its mother's mammary glands.

management – the act of directing or controlling

Management practices for wildlife can involve habitat protection.

metabolism – the rate at which a living creature uses up the energy it gets from its food

During hibernation, the metabolism of a mammal slows down.

natural resources – materials, plants and animals found in nature that are useful or necessary for people to live

Water, wildlife and forests are just some of Illinois' natural resources.

nocturnal – of or occurring at night

Bats are nocturnal mammals.

omnivore – any animal that eats plants, the flesh of other animals or anything else

Raccoons are omnivores, eating fishes, fruits, grain and other items.

photosynthesis – the process by which a plant makes simple sugar using light, chlorophyll, carbon dioxide and water

Photosynthesis is an important step in all food chains.

predator – animal that lives by hunting other animals for food

As a predator, the bobcat feeds on prey, such as mice and squirrels.

premolars/molars – teeth located along the sides and back of one or both jaws, used for grinding and shearing

The large premolars and molars of a white-tailed deer grind the plant material that it eats.

prey – animal that is caught, killed and eaten by another animal

The grasshopper was prey for the white-footed mouse.

rare – low, but stable, in number

The population of some rare species may have always been low due to their specific habitat requirements.

restocking – replacing a supply of something, refilling

Biologists raise and restock wildlife into their natural habitats, such as wetlands.

scavenger – any animal that eats the dead bodies of other animals but does not catch and kill them itself

A Virginia opossum can be a scavenger on road-killed animals.

sedimentation – filling up of streams, ponds, lakes and other bodies of water by silt and runoff

Sedimentation can cause many problems for aquatic mammals.

small game – small wild animals or fishes hunted or caught for sport or food

The group went hunting for rabbits and other small game species.

species – a type of living thing

Gray squirrels and fox squirrels are two different species of mammals.

survive – to live longer than; live through; to continue to exist

The rabbit survived the harsh, cold winter.

terrain – the physical features of a piece of land

Eastern woodrats prefer a hilly, rocky terrain to live in.

threatened – to be in danger of harm; any animal or plant species which is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future

Four mammal species in Illinois are listed as threatened (as of 2009).

top predator – any predator in a food chain on which no others prey

The bobcat is a top predator.

tracks – the footprints left by an animal in soft soil, mud, sand or snow

Many animal tracks can be seen in the mud along the river.

uterus – the organ in a female mammal in which the developing young grow

Development of mammals before birth occurs in the mother's uterus.

viviparous – giving birth to live young (not hatched from eggs)

All mammals, except the duck-billed platypus and echidna, are viviparous.

wean – the progression of a young mammal from dependence on its mother's milk to independent eating

The fawn was weaned and now eats only plant materials.

warm-blooded – maintaining a constant internal body temperature

One of the traits of a mammal is that it is warm-blooded.