

HOME SWEET HOME IN THE HEARTLAND

HABITAT HEROES

BE A HABITAT HERO

Learn more about animals in your locale. Help others understand and protect animal habitats.

A good resource is the Missouri Department of Conservation, <https://mdc.mo.gov>.

Their website allows you to search for many kinds of animals.

Visit their site to learn more about the animals mentioned in this article; the tricolored bat, the grotto salamander, catfish and urban animals like red foxes.



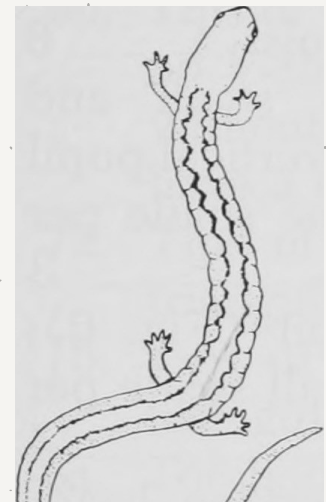
This week's feature highlights the Missouri habitats of caves, rivers and cities. Caves abound in Ozark karst limestone areas.

They provide unique animal habitats with no light and constant temperature. The Tri-colored bat lives there, weighs between 2 and 8 grams, eats insects, and its guano (droppings) provide energy for other cave creatures.

The grotto salamander, a troglobite, cannot live outside the cave. Unlike bats that can fly out to feed, as the grotto salamander matures it loses its pigment and its eyelids fuse shut so it becomes a cave creature.

Rivers and streams, along with wetlands, springs and lakes, form much of Missouri's aquatic habitats. What is included in your local watershed? There are an amazing variety of creatures living in these habitats and the Missouri River catfish is one of the most famous. Research local reptiles, amphibians and fish in your area.

Urban habitats are growing, and wild pristine habitats are shrinking. Foxes, omnivores that eat plants and animals, can live in both. Urban red foxes eat scavenged food because food, as well as den opportunities in urban habitats, is plentiful. Amazingly, fox population densities are higher in cities than in the country.



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