

COMMON SNAPPING TURTLE

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These awesome animals are some of the most impressive inhabitants of aquatic southeastern habitats. Their huge heads and saw-toothed tails give them a prehistoric appearance. These turtles reach 50 or more pounds, although the average-sized adult weighs 20-30 lbs.

Common snappers are at home in slow-moving streams, rivers, lakes and ponds. They feed on a variety of foods, including insects, crayfish, birds, mammals, carrion and aquatic vegetation.

SREL researchers have found that female snappers on the Savannah River Site lay 17-55 eggs in a cavity they dig with their back legs. After a 2- to 3-month incubation period, the one-inch-long hatchlings emerge in July or August.



(Photos by David Scott)

Snappers are inoffensive when in the water, but can be downright pugnacious when encountered on land. Their strong jaws and sharp claws can be formidable weapons for protection. Small to medium-sized individuals can be carefully moved out of the road by grasping them by the tail.



Although they look and act fierce, snappers pose no real danger to people unless they are provoked. Their impressive size and stern demeanor make them outstanding members of our animal kingdom.



*This information is provided as a public service by the **Savannah River Ecology Laboratory Outreach Office**. For more information, call Tony Mills at (803) 725-9725 or Lindy Nowak at (803) 725-0156.*

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