

American toad *Anaxyrus americanus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Family: Bufonidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The American toad averages about two to three and one-half inches in length. It has long, parotoid glands on the upper back that are connected to the ridge behind the eye by a short spur. There are dark spots on the belly. The dark spots on the back include one or two warts, or bumps. The body color may be brown, gray, olive or brick red.

BEHAVIORS

The American toad may be found in all but the southeastern portion of Illinois. This amphibian lives anywhere it has access to shallow bodies of water for breeding, moist hiding places and plenty of food, such as in gardens, lawns, woods or fields. The American toad hides in shrubbery or soil during the day and is active at night. It breeds in spring. The male calls with a high, musical trill. The female may lay several thousand (2,000 to 20,000) eggs in long strings that may extend for several feet along the bottom of a pond or ditch. Hatching occurs one week later with metamorphosis (change to land-based form) in early June. This amphibian eats insects and worms.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; lakes, ponds and reservoirs; marshes; peatlands; rivers and streams; swamps; temporary water supplies; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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