

Blanding's turtle *Emydoidea blandingii*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Testudines

Family: Emydidae

ILLINOIS STATUS endangered, native

FEATURES

Blanding's turtle averages five to seven and one-half inches in length. It has a hinge on the plastron (lower shell), allowing the shell to be partially closed. Its yellow chin and throat are distinctive. The carapace (upper shell) is helmet-shaped and covered with pale yellow spots. The plastron is yellow with black blotches.

BEHAVIORS

Blanding's turtle may be found in the northern one-half of Illinois. It lives in marshes, bogs, lakes and streams. This reptile prefers aquatic habitats with much vegetation and a mud bottom. Blanding's turtle is aquatic but is often found on land not far from water. It spends the winter buried in mud at the bottom of its body of water. Courtship and mating occur from April through June. The female deposits about six to 15 eggs in a nest in the soil during June or July. The eggs hatch in August or September. Blanding's turtle eats crayfish, insects, frogs, snails, berries and plants. This turtle may live for more than 70 years. Populations of this turtle in Illinois are small and isolated due to the loss of marsh habitat.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; marshes; peatlands; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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