

broad-headed skink *Plestiodon laticeps*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Scincidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The broad-headed skink averages six and one-half to nearly 13 inches in length. It has smooth, shiny scales. The male has an olive-brown body with a red-brown, large head and swollen cheeks. The female and young have a dark body with five, long, light stripes.

BEHAVIORS

The broad-headed skink may be found in the southern one-half of Illinois and areas around the Illinois and Mississippi rivers. It lives in dead trees that have woodpecker holes, swampy areas and wooded areas as well as empty urban lots. The broad-headed skink moves quickly and is a good climber. It is active during the day. It will bite if disturbed. The mating season occurs from April through May. The female deposits six to 16 eggs in a rotten log or stump or in leaf litter sometime in June or July. The female remains with the eggs until hatching, a period of one to two months. This animal eats insects and any other animals it can overpower.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; swamps

Woodland Habitats

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

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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