

## common five-lined skink *Plestiodon fasciatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Scincidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The common five-lined skink averages five to eight and one-half inches in length. It has smooth, shiny scales. The female and young have five long, light stripes on a dark background. The male is tan, gray or bronze. The male's cheeks become red or orange and swollen during the breeding season. The blue tail of a young common five-lined skink is distinctive.

### BEHAVIORS

The common five-lined skink may be found in the southern one-half of Illinois. This reptile lives in woodlots with rotting stumps and logs, abandoned lumber or sawdust piles, rock piles and decaying piles of vegetation in or near woods. It may be found around farm buildings, rock gardens and patios. The common five-lined skink is terrestrial, foraging by day. Its tail breaks off easily. The animal will bite if disturbed. The bright blue tail of the young skink is believed to be an identifying feature to protect it from attack by adult males. Mating occurs in May. The female deposits about two to 18 eggs in rotten logs or stumps, leaf litter or under rocks during June or July. The female remains with the eggs until hatching, a period of one to two months. The skink eats arthropods (insects, spiders and others), earthworms and mollusks (snails, slugs and others).

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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