

eastern hog-nosed snake *Heterodon platirhinos*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Dipsadidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The eastern hog-nosed snake averages 20 to 33 inches in length. Its snout is upturned with a ridge on the top. Body color varies. The snake may be yellow, brown, gray, olive, orange or red. The back usually has dark blotches but may be plain. A pair of large, dark blotches is found behind the head. The underside of the tail is lighter than the belly. Scales are keeled (ridged).

BEHAVIORS

The eastern hog-nosed snake may be found statewide in Illinois. This terrestrial snake lives in areas with sandy or loose soil, such as floodplains, old fields, woods and hillsides. It is active in the day. It may overwinter in an abandoned small mammal burrow. This snake will flatten its head and neck, hiss and inflate its body with air when disturbed, hence its nickname of “puff adder.” It may also vomit, flip over on its back, shudder a few times and play dead. The hog-nosed snake will excrete large amounts of foul-smelling waste material if picked up. Mating season occurs in April and May. An average of eight to 20 eggs may be deposited by the female under rocks or in loose soil in June, July or August. Hatching occurs in August or September. This snake eats toads and frogs.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; swamps

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge; sand prairie

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