

eastern mole *Scalopus aquaticus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Soricomorpha

Family: Talpidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The eastern mole is four and one-half to six and one-half inches in length. Its body fur is gray-black, and the tops of the feet have white fur. The big claws and paddlelike front feet are used for digging. The nose is long and hairless. The short tail (one to one and one-half inches) has few hairs.

BEHAVIORS

The eastern mole may be found statewide in Illinois. It lives in wooded areas, pastures, gardens, cemeteries, farm fields and lawns. This species eats mostly insects but will consume earthworms or any available food. The mole digs tunnels both just below the soil surface and at deeper levels. Digging is done with the front feet, using them to push aside soil. In good soil conditions, a mole can dig as much as 18 feet in an hour. Shallow tunnels are for finding food. Deeper burrows are for nesting and resting. A mole can turn around in a tunnel by completing a slow somersault. Not much is known about mole reproduction. The gestation period is one to two months. Young seem to be born between February and June.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

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

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2016. Biodiversity of Illinois.