

false map turtle *Graptemys pseudogeographica*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Testudines

Family: Emydidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The female false map turtle averages five to nearly 11 inches in length while the male is about three and one-half to seven and three-fourths inches long. Yellow boomerang-shaped or L-shaped markings just behind the eyes and yellow lines on the head, neck, legs and tail are present. The brown, olive or tan carapace (upper shell) appears oval when seen from above. The keel (ridge) in the center of the carapace has spikes, and the back of the carapace has projections like the teeth of a saw. This turtle has webbed toes. The male has very long toenails on the front feet.

BEHAVIORS

The false map turtle may be found statewide in Illinois. It lives in large rivers and lakes. This reptile basks in the sun on logs or other objects at the water's edge. It may remain active in the winter months but normally will bury itself in mud for the duration of the coldest weather. Mating occurs in spring. The female digs a nest in soil some distance from the water, depositing 10 to 16 eggs. She may lay three clutches per year. Eggs hatch in mid- to late-July. This turtle eats mollusks (snails, slugs and others), crayfish, worms, plants and insects.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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