

mole salamander *Ambystoma talpoideum*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Caudata

Family: Ambystomatidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The mole salamander averages three to four inches in length. The head and feet of this animal are very large compared to the rest of the body. The body may be black, brown or gray and may have gray flecks. It usually has a dark stripe on the belly.

BEHAVIORS

The mole salamander lives in lowland woods. It spends much of the time underground or beneath objects like rocks and logs. It ventures above ground to reproduce. Eggs are attached to vegetation in shallow woodland ponds or swamps. Each female may produce 200 to 400 eggs. Transformation to the land-based adult takes place three to four months after the eggs are deposited. This salamander eats worms, mollusks (snails, slugs) and arthropods (spiders, insects, mites and others).

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; temporary water supplies

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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