

## pond slider *Trachemys scripta*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Testudines

Family: Emydidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The pond slider averages five to eight inches in length. It has a red stripe behind each eye. The carapace (upper shell) appears oval when viewed from above, and the rear margin of the shell is saw-toothed. The toes are webbed. The carapace is brown or olive, and the legs, head and tail have yellow stripes. Some older adults become uniformly dark.

### BEHAVIORS

The pond slider may be found statewide in Illinois. It lives in quiet water that has a muddy bottom and much vegetation. This reptile is aquatic, rarely coming to land except to lay eggs or to bask in the sun on logs or other objects along the water's edge. It feeds in early morning and late evening. The mating season lasts from March to June. The female digs a nest on land from mid-May through early July and deposits from five to 18 eggs, the number depending on her size and age. She may lay two or three clutches per year. Hatching occurs about two months after the eggs are laid. The pond slider eats plants, fishes, amphibians, crustaceans, mollusks (snails, slugs and others) and insects. It tends to be more of a carnivore when young and an herbivore when older.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; marshes; peatlands; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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