

eastern spadefoot *Scaphiopus holbrookii*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Family: Scaphiopodidae

ILLINOIS STATUS threatened, native

FEATURES

The eastern spadefoot averages one and three-fourths to two and one-fourth inches in length. It has an elongate, sickle-shaped spade on each hind foot which is used for burrowing. The skin is smooth. A vertical pupil, small parotoid glands and a yellow line on the back from each eye are other visible traits. There may be an additional light line along each side of the body. Body color is brown, gray-brown or black-brown.

BEHAVIORS

The eastern spadefoot may be found in the southern tip of Illinois. This small frog lives in sandy soil or loose agricultural soil. It spends most of the year under ground, coming out only to breed. Active at night, it can quickly bury itself, rear end first, by scooping soil with its spades. Breeding occurs March through September whenever there are heavy rains. The male's call is an explosive, low-pitched grunt. Eggs are deposited in short strings that are attached to vegetation in the water of temporary ponds. Hatching occurs in one to two days. Tadpoles transform to the adult form in two to three weeks. The eastern spadefoot eats arthropods (spiders, insects, mites and others) and annelids (earthworms, leeches).

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; temporary water supplies

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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