

Franklin's ground squirrel *Spermophilus franklinii*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Rodentia

Family: Sciuridae

ILLINOIS STATUS threatened, native

FEATURES

Franklin's ground squirrel has olive-gray body fur with scattered black hairs. The head has gray hairs, each with a white tip. The belly has cream-colored fur while the tail hairs are black and brown with a white tip. The tail is barely more than one-half the length of the head and body combined. This mammal has small, rounded ears.

BEHAVIORS

Franklin's ground squirrel may be found in the northern two-thirds of Illinois. It lives in areas with grasses that are short enough so that it may see over them when standing upright on its hind legs. These areas have grasses that are taller than those preferred by the thirteen-lined ground squirrel. Franklin's ground squirrel eats carrion, mammals, insects, birds, bird eggs and plants. Its movements through grasses produce runways. Its burrow is dug underground, and the entrance has some dirt piled around it. The burrow is located deep enough to have temperatures above freezing in winter and to be able to be drained quickly and not flooded. This animal may produce a whistle or chirp when disturbed. When above ground, Franklin's ground squirrel may climb trees. This mammal is diurnal, being most active in the middle of the day. Mating occurs in May, and young are born from mid-May through mid-June. Franklin's ground squirrel hibernates for seven to eight months each year.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge

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