

plains leopard frog *Lithobates blairi*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Family: Ranidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The plains leopard frog averages two to three and three-fourths inches in length. Its stocky body is usually brown. A light line is found along the upper jaw, and a light spot occurs on the tympanum (eardrum). A dark spot on the snout and dorsolateral ridges that are interrupted in the lower back area and inset toward the center are also characteristic features.

BEHAVIORS

In Illinois, the plains leopard frog may be found in central sections and the Mississippi River valley. It lives in prairies, former prairies, marshland, creeks, bottomlands and old fields. This frog breeds with the onset of warm, spring rains. The male's call is two or three spaced notes like "chuck-chuck" or "chuck-chuck-chuck." The female deposits several thousand eggs in a submerged mass. Hatching occurs in two to three weeks, and transformation to the adult form usually occurs June through August, although some tadpoles may overwinter. The plains leopard frog eats arthropods (spiders, insects, mites and others) and mollusks (snails, slugs and others).

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; marshes; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests]

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge; hill prairie

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