

smooth earthsnake *Virginia valeriae*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Natricidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The smooth earthsnake averages seven to 10 inches in length. It has a gray or red-brown back with no markings and a white or yellow belly. The scales are smooth or weakly keeled (ridged).

BEHAVIORS

The smooth earthsnake may be found in the southern one-third of Illinois. It lives in moist, wooded hillsides and abandoned fields where it generally hides under rocks. The smooth earthsnake stays underground for long periods of time, coming out after heavy rains. It is active mainly at night. Mating occurs in May or June. Two to 14 young are born to the female in August or September. This snake eats earthworms, slugs and soft-bodied insects.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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