

southern leopard frog *Lithobates sphenoccephalus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Anura

Family: Ranidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The southern leopard frog averages two to three and one-half inches in length. There is no dark spot on the snout. The male's vocal sacs are visible even when it is not calling. The spots on the back are smaller than the eye diameter. The body is light tan, gray-green or light brown. There is a light spot in the center of the tympanum. The dorsolateral folds are light in color and extend to the groin area.

BEHAVIORS

The southern leopard frog may be found in the southern one-half of Illinois. This frog lives in streams, ponds and lakes. In summer it is often found well away from water. The southern leopard frog is a wary, alert, excellent jumper. It may scream when grabbed by a predator. Breeding occurs from early March through April in ponds, lakes, sloughs or flooded fields. The call of the male is a short, chuckling trill. The female deposits 3,000 to 5,000 eggs in three- to six-inch spheres in water. Hatching occurs in about seven to 14 days. Transformation to the adult occurs in June or July. The southern leopard frog eats arthropods (spiders, insects, mites and others), mollusks (snails, slugs and others) and annelids (earthworms, leeches).

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; hill prairie

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2017. Biodiversity of Illinois.