

western wormsnake *Carphophis vermis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Dipsadidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The western wormsnake has a two-toned body coloration. It is purple-brown to black on the dorsal side with a salmon-pink belly color that extends onto the sides. The head is flattened, and the tail is pointed, both features to help movement in soil. The scales are smooth, and the anal plate is divided. The male has a longer tail than the female. An adult western wormsnake ranges from seven and one-half to 14 inches long.

BEHAVIORS

The western wormsnake lives on rocky, wooded hillsides or in woodland edges. It spends most of its time below ground in burrows, under rocks and logs or in damp soil. It is active from March through October but may aestivate in summer if its environment becomes hot and dry. It eats earthworms and insects. Mating usually occurs in spring, but these snakes may breed in fall, too. Eggs are laid under rocks or below ground in June or July, with one to six eggs per clutch. Eggs hatch in mid- to late August. In Illinois, it is found in the west central counties along the Mississippi River.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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