



## ground skink

*Scincella lateralis*

Kingdom: Animalia  
Division/Phylum: Chordata  
Class: Reptilia  
Order: Squamata  
Family: Scincidae

## FEATURES

The ground skink averages three to five and three-fourths inches in length and has smooth, shiny scales. Its body is golden brown to dark brown with dark stripes along the sides of the back. A "window" in the lower eyelid allows for vision when the eyelid is closed.

## BEHAVIORS

The ground skink may be found in the southern one-third of Illinois. This animal lives on the woodland floor, where it forages during the day. It is very difficult to see unless it runs, rustling leaves on the ground as it moves. Courtship and mating occur in late spring or early summer. Each female may deposit two clutches of about five eggs each. Eggs are often retained in the female's body for a considerable period of time before they are deposited, a process which shortens the incubation period. Eggs are placed in rotten logs, stumps, leaf litter or under rocks. Eggs hatch in August. This skink eats worms, insects and other arthropods.

## HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

## ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

## ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: southern 1/3

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.  
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.