



pillbug

representative specimen

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Arthropoda
Class: Malacostraca
Order: Isopoda
Family:

FEATURES

The pillbug is a land-based crustacean. It grows to about one-half inch in length. Its body is flattened dorsoventrally (top to bottom) and has three divisions: cephalothorax, thorax and abdomen. Each segment of the thorax has one pair of walking legs. Additional appendages are found on the abdominal segments. The pillbug has compound eyes and antennae. It does not have tail-like extensions on its posterior end like the similar sowbug or wood louse. It has the ability to roll into a ball when disturbed. Reproduction is sexual with up to 200 eggs being produced at one time.

BEHAVIORS

The pillbug may be found statewide in Illinois. It lives on land and can be found in nearly any moist habitat, especially in places like under fallen logs, under leaf litter or under rocks. It is a scavenger of dead or dying organisms. The pillbug is often called a roly-poly, for its ability to roll into a ball shape when it is disturbed. This animal may live for three years if conditions are good. The female carries the eggs in a brood pouch under her body after they have been laid. The eggs hatch in three to seven weeks. Young stay in the brood pouch for six to eight weeks after hatching.

HABITATS

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: statewide

Summer resident:

Migrant: statewide

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
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