

slender glass lizard *Ophisaurus attenuates*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Anguidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The slender glass lizard averages 22 to 42 inches in length. It has a deep, flexible groove along each side of the body and does not have legs. Other features include movable eyelids and external ear openings. This animal feels stiff when touched due to the bony plates that reinforce its scales. The tail is very long and will break off easily. The regenerated tail is always shorter than the original and ends in a sharp point. Narrow, dark longitudinal stripes are present below the lateral groove and under the tail. White markings are present in the middle of the scales.

BEHAVIORS

The slender glass lizard may be found statewide in Illinois, but it is not abundant anywhere. This reptile lives in dry grasslands or dry, open woods. The slender glass lizard is terrestrial, preferring areas with loose sand and soil. It may be found under rocks, logs and other objects. It is active during the day. The name “glass lizard” comes from the ability of the tail to fracture easily into several pieces. This lizard burrows to hibernate. A groove along each side of the body allows the animal to expand when swollen with food or eggs (females). The mating season occurs in May. Five to 15 eggs are deposited by the female in moist soil or decaying logs in June or July. The female stays with the eggs during incubation. The slender glass lizard eats insects, spiders, snails, small snakes and other lizards.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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