

You'll Dig This

Taken from <http://dnr.il.state.us>



In any **ecosystem**, the organisms have their own special place to live and role to play. For example, in a prairie ecosystem, because there are few **trees** and so little shelter, the main protection is **underground**. There they find safety, a place to build a nest to rest and breed, and **shelter** from the sun and cold wind. These "below ground" animals are called burrowing animals. **Burrowing** animals have special adaptations that enable them to travel and live underground, such as a cylindrical body shape, sharp teeth and **claws**, spade-like feet, hidden ears and eyes, and a long slender **snout**.

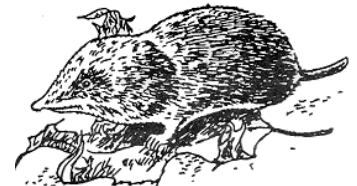


TEST your knowledge of Illinois burrowing prairie animals by putting the number of the clue on the line next to the corresponding animals name.

- ___ plains pocket gopher (*Geomys bursarius*)
- ___ prairie vole (*Microtus ochrogaster*)
- ___ **badger** (*Taxidea taxus*)
- ___ least shrew (*Cryptotis parva*)
- ___ deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)
- ___ **earthworm** (*Lumbricus* sp.)
- ___ Franklin's (ground squirrel)
- ___ white **grubs** (*Phyllophaga lachnosterna*)
- ___ mole cricket (*Gryllotalpa hexadactyla*)
- ___ Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

CLUES

5. This mammal uses its well-developed cheek **pouches** to transport food to its burrow chamber.
10. This mammal has a unique white **stripe** starting on its nose that runs down the middle of its back.
2. In Illinois the weight of a non-pregnant animal of this type is usually less than 6.7 grams.
9. This short-tailed mammal's burrowing system is connected on the surface by **runways** under vegetation.
7. This is a small **rodent** that has large eyes and gives birth to young each month of the year.
4. This is a **terrestrial** animal's whole cylindrical segmented body helps aerate and enrich the soil as it burrows.
1. The **whistle** - a thrill or rapid chirp - of this mammal may indicate its presence more easily than a sighting.
6. This is the June **beetle** larvae that feed in the soil on roots and grasses and other plants.
8. This brownish **insect**, about an inch or more in length, has short **antennae** and broad spade-like front legs.
3. This mammal is oriented to raising a family and much of its activity centers around the **den**.



Nuts About Nature

Compliments of the
Fayette County SWCD



WORD FIND

On the front page of this newsletter there are twenty, green bold words. Search for those words in our Conservation Word Find at the right.

- Answers to You'll Dig This
1. Franklin's Ground Squirrel
 2. Least Shrew
 3. Red Fox
 4. Earthworm
 5. Plains Pocket Gopher
 6. White Grub
 7. Deer Mouse
 8. Mole Cricket
 9. Prairie Vole
 10. Badger

Z	N	M	L	M	B	P	G	G	R	P	S	Y	N	T	U	A	D
U	E	M	N	A	H	E	N	Z	O	Z	H	R	O	D	E	N	T
F	T	E	Q	H	I	I	E	U	A	Q	E	K	J	E	I	R	A
R	D	U	U	A	W	R	C	T	O	G	L	Q	X	Y	E	L	R
P	X	P	O	O	E	H	T	W	L	J	T	M	J	E	A	M	E
Q	U	Q	R	N	E	L	O	S	Y	E	E	E	S	N	X	P	G
S	E	R	C	S	S	N	T	W	E	X	R	B	P	G	B	J	D
P	U	T	J	A	G	N	R	S	X	R	A	I	W	R	U	M	A
B	Y	K	C	R	N	B	B	I	I	N	R	E	E	S	A	E	B
U	X	P	C	S	R	T	Y	I	E	H	Q	E	L	B	I	T	E
I	T	U	H	R	W	H	E	P	K	O	W	Q	T	U	N	S	B
B	C	Y	P	N	W	L	I	N	V	T	M	Q	M	R	S	Y	M
S	Y	A	W	N	U	R	P	V	N	Q	E	D	O	G	E	S	P
W	R	K	X	S	T	F	R	Q	D	A	D	P	E	A	C	O	I
T	U	G	S	S	R	W	L	Y	V	G	E	B	G	Q	T	C	R
N	W	X	T	X	D	N	U	O	R	G	R	E	D	N	U	E	G
N	Y	E	A	R	T	H	W	O	R	M	S	W	A	L	C	N	X
F	Z	C	I	X	K	W	F	V	H	I	U	M	M	E	W	J	Z



DID YOU KNOW?

You can look at everything from a mouse to exploring a cave at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Website. Just type in <http://dnr.il.state.us>. Then click on kids and Education on the left side of the screen. This will take you to all of the kid friendly information that they have to offer. Enjoy yourself and plan on staying for a long time. There is a lot to look at.

