

# Illinois Chorus Frog

*Pseudacris streckeri illinoensis*

## Best Management Practices

Missouri Department of Conservation

Common name ▪ Illinois Chorus Frog  
Scientific name ▪ *Pseudacris streckeri illinoensis*

State status ▪ Rare  
Federal status ▪ None

### Ecology

Illinois chorus frogs are found in west-central and southwestern Illinois, southeastern Missouri and northeastern Arkansas. In Missouri, they have historically preferred flat, sand areas, but they now inhabit soybean, corn fields and cotton fields. Illinois chorus frogs are the largest chorus frog, with large, muscular forelimbs. Their color may vary from light tan to tan-gray with a distinct V-shaped marking between the eyes, a dark stripe from the snout to the shoulder and a dark spot below the eye. The majority of time is spent burrowing in the sand. These frogs emerge from the sand and breed in late winter, usually late February through early April, in flooded fields, ditches or other temporary, fishless bodies of water. Females lay 200-400 eggs and tadpoles develop into frogs after about 60 days. Males defend calling stations during breeding season. Adults range in length from 1-1.6 inches. Illinois chorus frogs eat various small insects and possibly burrowing larvae.

### Reasons for Decline

Illinois chorus frogs historically inhabited the former sand prairies of southeastern Missouri. However, as this unique habitat has been totally eliminated, so has much of the chorus frog population. In addition, continued draining and clearing of bottomlands in southeastern Missouri have greatly reduced breeding habitat of this species. It also is possible that increased exposure to herbicides and pesticides will cause further declines in populations of the Illinois chorus frog and other amphibians and reptiles.



### Recommendations

Illinois chorus frogs appear to be tolerant of agricultural as long as breeding sites exist in the area. As do many amphibians, Illinois chorus frogs require different habitat conditions at different stages in their life cycle. From the time eggs are laid until the tadpoles develop into frogs, these amphibians require ephemeral pools. As adults, chorus frogs require loose, sandy soil for burrowing. For these reasons, it is important to protect all bottomland and sand prairie habitat and ephemeral pools within the range of the Illinois chorus frog.

### Beneficial Practices

- Erosion and sediment controls should be strictly implemented,

monitored and maintained for the duration of the project.

- Disposal of wastes and garbage should be done in designated areas far from wetlands.
- Develop and maintain shallow, (12 to 16 inches), fishless waterholes, ponds, potholes, and ephemeral pools.
- Control livestock grazing.
- During construction, move soil perpendicular to and away from the presumed direction of water flow, so excess water will flow away.

### **Adverse Practices**

- Draining or destroying known wetland habitat.
- Removing or destroying unique habitat features, such as downed trees, that provide habitat for reptiles and amphibians.
- Altering water levels and regimes in wetlands or seasonally flooded areas within the range of the Illinois chorus frog.
- Physically or chemically removing or altering the vegetation in the 100-foot buffer around wetlands or seasonally flooded areas.
- Application of herbicides, insecticides, and inorganic fertilizers where possible.

### **Information Contacts**

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### **Legal Issues**

These Best Management Practices were prepared by the Missouri Department of Conservation with assistance from other state agencies, contractors, and others to provide guidance to those people who wish to voluntarily act to protect wildlife and habitat.

Compliance with Best Management Practices is not required by the Missouri wildlife and forestry law nor by any regulation of the Missouri Conservation Commission. Other federal, state or local laws may affect construction practices.

“State Endangered Status” is determined by the Missouri Conservation Commission under constitutional authority, and specific requirements for impacts to such species are expressed in the Missouri Wildlife Code, rule 3CSR10-4.111.