

California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Interagency Wildlife Task Group

SONORAN DESERT TOAD

Incilius alvarius

Family: BUFONIDAE
A030

Order: ANURA

Class: AMPHIBIA

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

Sonoran desert toads are found in the lower Colorado River and in the irrigated lowlands of the extreme southeast portion of Imperial Co. In the main part of its range it can be found from sea-level to 1600 m (5300 ft). It can be found in a variety of desert and semi-arid habitats: brushy desert with creosote bush and mesquite washes, semi-arid grasslands and woodlands. It is semi-aquatic and is usually associated with large, somewhat permanent streams. It is occasionally found near small springs, temporary rain pools, human-made canals and irrigation ditches. This species is active from March to July during periods of warm rainfall (Arnold 1943, Wright and Wright 1949, Behler and King 1979).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: This species feeds primarily on moderately large insects, spiders, scorpions, centipedes, and snails. Is also known to eat small lizards, other amphibians and mice (King 1932, Stebbins 1985). In the eastern part of its range it forages primarily on beetles, ants, termites, centipedes, and young spadefoots (*Scaphiopus*) (Cole 1962).

Cover: When not on the surface this species uses the burrows of other animals as refugia. It has also been found underneath watering troughs (Wright and Wright 1949, Stebbins 1985).

Reproduction: Its primary breeding habitat is moderately large streams, but it is also known to breed in temporary rain pools, and human-made watering holes and irrigation ditches (Blair and Pettus 1954, Stebbins 1954, 1985, Savage and Schuierer 1961).

Water: This species needs permanent or semi-permanent water sources for breeding.

Pattern: Usually found in the vicinity of streams or other sources of water during periods of wet weather.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Nocturnal, found on the surface from early May to July (Stebbins 1985). Activity stimulated by rainfall, but have been observed on the surface before the onset of the rainy season (Arnold 1943, Mayhew 1968).

Seasonal Movements/Migration: No specific information available, but probably do not move large distances toward breeding areas.

Home Range: No information.

Territory: No information.

Reproduction: The peak reproductive activity occurs in the spring with the onset of warm rains. Calling aggregations of up to 200 adult males have been observed (Blair and Pettus 1954). 7,500 to 8,000 eggs are laid in a string by the female (Wright and Wright 1949).

Niche: Raccoons have been observed feeding on adults (Wright 1966).

Comments: Also called Sonoran Desert toad (Stebbins 1985).

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