

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

---

KERN PLATEAU SLENDER SALAMANDER                      *Batrachoseps robustus*  
Family: PLETHODONTIDAE                      Order: CAUDATA                      Class: AMPHIBIA  
A063

Written by: CWHR Program Staff, August 2005  
Updated by: CWHR Program Staff, October 2005

#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

Found in Kern Co. on the Kern Plateau of the southeastern Sierra Nevada, and in the Scodie Mountains, with an elevation range of 1,615 - 2,804 m (5,298 - 9,199 ft) (Stebbins, 2003). Occurs in moist areas among a variety of montane conifer, hardwood and shrub species, including Jeffrey pine and red fir in the northern and more humid parts of its range, and lodgepole pine, pinyon pine, black oak canyon oak, big sagebrush and rabbitbrush in the drier areas (Wake et al. 2002, Stebbins, 2003).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Feeding probably occurs both above and below ground (Hendrickson 1954). Assumed to eat prey items similar to what Stebbins (1951) reported for other species of *Batrachoseps*, including earthworms, small slugs, a variety of terrestrial arthropods, and insects.

**Cover:** Seeks cover under rocks and logs in moist soil, mostly along the edges of streams and in seasonal springs and seeps (Wake et al., 2002).

**Reproduction:** Most reproductive activities likely occur underground (Yanev 1978).

**Water:** Timing and duration of seasonal activity vary according to available surface moisture. Activity is probably limited to late winter and spring months (Wake et al. 2002).

**Pattern:** With decreasing elevation and precipitation, *B. robustus* is increasingly restricted to springs and seeps in otherwise arid surroundings (Wake et al. 2002).

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

**Activity Patterns:** Near surface activity probably limited to a few winter and early spring months (Wake et al. 2002). Salamanders of the genus *Batrachoseps* are normally active at night (Hendrickson 1954).

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Salamanders of the genus *Batrachoseps* are highly sedentary; hatchlings presumably disperse, but no data found (Yanev 1978).

**Home Range:** No data on this species. Hendrickson (1954) found that adults of *B. attenuatus* moved within a mean range of 1.5 m (5 ft) from their home cover over 2 years, and 59% of the individuals were found repeatedly under the same cover.

Territory: No data.

Reproduction: Clutch size apparently small (Wake et al. 2002). Females injected with hormones each laid 3 eggs (Jokusch 1996, as cited in Wake 2002).

Niche: Not known to be sympatric with any other salamander, except for a small zone of overlap with a population from the genus *Hydromantes* on the west side of the Owens Valley (Wake et al. 2002).

#### REFERENCES

- Hendrickson, J. R. 1954. Ecology and systematics of salamanders of the genus *Batrachoseps*. Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool. 54:1-46.
- Jokusch, E. L. 1996. Techniques for obtaining and raising plethodontid salamander eggs. Int. J. Devel. Biol. 40:911-912.
- Stebbins, R. C. 2003. Western reptiles and amphibians. Third edition. Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston and New York. 533 pp.
- Wake, D. B. K. P. Yanev, and R. W. Hansen. 2002. New species of slender salamander, Genus *Batrachoseps*, from the Southern Sierra Nevada of California. *Copeia* 4:1016-1028.
- Yanev, K. P. 1978. Evolutionary studies of the plethodontid salamander Genus *Batrachoseps*. Ph. D. Diss. Univ. Calif., Berkeley. 251pp.

A063

---

Life history accounts for species in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System were originally published in: Zeiner, D.C., W.F.Laudenslayer, Jr., K.E. Mayer, and M. White, eds. 1988-1990. California's Wildlife. Vol. I-III. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. Updates are noted in accounts that have been added or edited since original publication.