

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

SWITAK'S BANDED GECKO

Coleonyx switaki

Family: GEKKONIDAE
R007

Order: SQUAMATA

Class: REPTILIA

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

This species was first described from mid-peninsula Baja California but has been known from the California deserts since the 1930's. Most reported sightings have been by amateur collectors and no specimens have been available. In California, it is known from the east face of the Peninsular Ranges, and recent unsubstantiated reports place it at Scissors Crossing near Anza Borrego Desert, San Diego Co. It probably has a wider and more northerly distribution. Nothing is known about abundance. It occurs primarily in rocky areas at the heads of canyons, making population studies difficult.

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: This lizard is insectivorous, but nothing else is known about its diet.

Cover: This lizard has been found only in areas of massive rocks and rock outcrops at the heads of canyons. It occurs in rock cracks and crevices (Murphy 1974).

Reproduction: No data.

Water: Nothing known but probably not required.

Pattern: This species seems to be restricted to areas dominated by massive rock formations. Little else is known about its biology.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: This species is nocturnal and probably is active at least through spring and summer, and possibly during mild to warm weather in fall and winter. No actual data on seasonality (Murphy 1974).

Seasonal Movements/Migration: Nothing known but probably does not migrate.

Home Range: No data.

Territory: No data.

Reproduction: No data.

Niche: This species is probably preyed upon by larger, carnivorous lizards (*Crotaphytus*, *Gambelia*, *Sceloporus*), avian and snake predators.

General Comments: This species is very poorly known and there is no reason to think our knowledge will be increased anytime soon. A major problem in determining distribution or

biology of this species is its high market value in the underground pet trade (in 1983 \$400 was offered for a male and female in Los Angeles). Biologists have become secretive. Museum specimens have no locality data, and field notes have been stolen from museum offices. Kluge (1983) proposed changing the genus from *Anarbylus* to *Coleonyx*, and Stebbins (1985) followed this suggestion.

REFERENCES

- Kluge, A. 1983. Cladistic relationships among gekkonid lizards. *Copeia* 1983:465-475.
- Murphy, R. W. 1974. A new genus and species of eublepharine gecko (Sauria: Gekkonidae) from Baja California, Mexico. *Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci.* 40:87-92.
- Stebbins, R. C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. 2nd ed., revised. Houghton Mifflin, Boston. 336pp.

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