

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

LONG-NOSED LEOPARD LIZARD

Gambelia wislizenii

Family: CROTAPHYTIDAE
R018

Order: SQUAMATA

Class: REPTILIA

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

The long-nosed leopard lizard is widely distributed in the Southeastern Great Basin, Mojave, Sonoran and Colorado deserts of California and at the southern end of the Central Valley in Santa Barbara and eastern Kern cos. Frequents a variety of desert woodland and scrub habitats up to 1830 m (6000 ft) (Stebbins 1985). Prefers sandy or gravelly flats and plains, and is less common in rocky areas. The greatest densities have been observed in creosote flats. Becomes active later in the spring than do other lizards, usually not until mid-April, and is not found after mid-August (Stebbins 1954, McCoy 1967, Montanucci 1967, Parker and Pianka 1976, Tollestrup 1979, 1983).

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: This lizard eats insects (grasshoppers, beetles, etc.), lizards (*Callisaurus*, *Cnemidophorus*, *Phrynosoma*, etc.) and occasionally some plant material (Stebbins 1954, Dixon 1967, Tollestrup 1979).

Cover: This species excavates its own burrows in sandy and friable soils and probably uses rodent burrows.

Reproduction: This lizard requires adequate food supplies for reproduction.

Water: Not required.

Pattern: This lizard occupies desert flats and woodlands with sandy or gravelly substrates.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Adults are active from mid-April to mid-August. This lizard is diurnal and can be active all day when the weather is mild to warm. In hotter weather it is active early and late in the day, and in the hottest months only in the mornings. It emerges in mid-April and is active until August. Young emerge in August, when adults are ceasing activity. This may prevent cannibalism (Tollestrup 1979).

Seasonal Movements/Migration: None.

Home Range: This species has home ranges as large as several ha.

Territory: This lizard is not known to defend a territory.

Reproduction: Courtship occurs in late April to mid-May. Nesting occurs from May to

June and the young appear in August. Average clutch size is 5-6 with a range of 2-11, and occasionally two clutches are produced (Parker and Pianka 1976, Tollestrup 1983). In those years when rainfall is inadequate to support plant growth for insects and, indirectly, other insect-eating lizards, the long-nosed leopard lizard does not reproduce (Tollestrup 1983).

Niche: This lizard is probably preyed upon by *Crotalus cerastes*, *Masticophis*, roadrunners and other avian predators. Loggerhead shrikes take young lizards and an attack by a prairie falcon has been observed. A lack of rainfall can cause the failure of reproduction (Tollestrup 1983).

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