

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

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GRANITE SPINY LIZARD

*Sceloporus orcutti*

Family: PHRYNOSOMATIDAE  
R021

Order: SQUAMATA

Class: REPTILIA

Written by: R. Marlow  
Reviewed by: T. Papenfuss  
Edited by: S. Granholm

#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

The granite spiny lizard occurs from just north of San Geronio Pass in southern California, on both sides of the Peninsular Ranges south into Baja California. It is found in a variety of chaparral and forest habitats on the coast side of the mountains, and in more arid habitats on the desert side. It occurs in areas dominated by massive rock formations. It spends most of its time foraging or basking on rocks, and seeks shelter in rock crevices and under rocks. It reaches densities of 57 per ha (23 per ac). This species is active from mid-spring until mid-fall (Stebbins 1954, Mayhew 1963, Turner 1977).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** This species eats insects; beetles, hymenopterans, lepidopterous larvae, grasshoppers, cicadas; buds, and fleshy fruits of plants. Sometimes smaller individuals are cannibalized (Stebbins 1954, Mayhew 1963).

**Cover:** These lizards use rocks, rock outcrops and boulder piles for cover. Much of their time is spent on rock, foraging and basking. They seek shelter in cracks, crevices, and under rocks (Stebbins 1954, Mayhew 1963).

**Reproduction:** This species presumably lays eggs in nests constructed in friable, sandy, well-drained soil.

**Water:** Probably not required.

**Pattern:** This lizard occurs in a wide variety of arid and semiarid habitats that are dominated by the presence of massive to scattered rock formations. The lizards make extensive use of rocks for shelter, foraging sites and perches. They are rarely found away from rocks.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

**Activity Patterns:** This lizard is diurnal, actively foraging or basking all day during mild weather and restricting activity and basking to early and late in the day when temperatures are high. This lizard is active from mid-spring to mid-fall.

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** This species is not known to migrate.

**Home Range:** This species has been reported to have a home range of 150 m (500 ft) radius (Mayhew 1963).

**Territory:** Males are territorial (Mayhew 1963).

Reproduction: Copulation occurs in March and April and eggs are laid from May to early June. Clutches average 9 and range from 6-11 eggs (Stebbins 1954, Mayhew 1963).

Niche: There are no reports of predation on this species except for cannibalism (Mayhew 1963). It is probably taken by *Crotaphytus* and *Gambelia*, especially when young. Predatory birds and snakes probably take this species.

#### REFERENCES

- Mayhew, W. W. 1963. Biology of the granite spiny lizard, *Sceloporus orcutti*. *Am. Midl. Nat.* 69:310-327.
- Stebbins, R. C. 1954. *Amphibians and reptiles of western North America*. McGraw-Hill, New York. 536pp.
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- Weintraub, J. D. 1980. *Sceloporus orcutti*. *Cat. Am. Amphibians and Reptiles* 265.-342.

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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.