

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

PANAMINT ALLIGATOR LIZARD

Elgaria panamintina

Family: ANGUIDAE
R041

Order: SQUAMATA

Class: REPTILIA

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DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

The Panamint alligator lizard occurs only in Inyo and southeastern Mono cos. It has been found in the White and Inyo mountains to the north and west and in the Panamints to the south and east. Anecdotal accounts of uncertain origin suggest this lizard, or another like it, may inhabit other desert mountain ranges south and east of this present distribution. Elevations range from 960-2290 m (2500-8000 ft) (Banta et al. 1996). Few specimens are available, mostly captured in piffall traps. Abundance and other aspects of the biology are poorly known. All specimens have been taken near permanent water in canyons or in talus near dense vegetation. This species appears to occupy a habitat that is relictual from former wetter times. As the desert has dried out it has been restricted to a few moist mountain localities. Its distribution and secretive habits may preclude its being well known.

SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

Feeding: Very little is known. Eats arthropods and actively seeks food during the day (Dixon 1975).

Cover: Most specimens have been taken near permanent water and the resulting dense vegetation, under debris or in rock rubble and talus (Stebbins 1958, 1985, Banta 1963, Dixon 1975). It would seem that some form of cover is required.

Reproduction: Nothing is known about reproductive requirements.

Water: Most specimens have been taken near permanent water, so it would seem to require permanent water for physiological or ecological needs.

Pattern: Found near permanent water in canyons, damp gullies, and rocky areas near dense vegetation.

SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

Activity Patterns: Specimens have been observed active during the day (Dixon 1975) and at dusk. Little other information is available. They are probably active during the day when temperatures are mild and in the morning and evening when hot. They are probably active earlier in the year at warmer low elevations than at higher elevations.

Seasonal Movements/Migration: None.

Home Range: Nothing known, but it is likely that home ranges are restricted to the vicinity of permanent sources of water and may be only a few 10's of square meters.

Territory: No data.

Reproduction: Very little is known. One clutch of 12 eggs has been reported. Probably breeds in late May or early June, slightly earlier at lower or more southerly localities.

Niche: Little is known of the biology of this animal. It is probably preyed upon by several of the lizard-eating snake predators (*Masticophis*, *Rhinocheilus* and *Crotalus cerastes*), avian predators (loggerhead shrike, falcon, roadrunner) and mammalian predators (coyote kit fox, and badger) but no predation has been reported. No other lizards seem to compete for the localities or food sources of this species and no parasites are known.

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