

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

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SANDSTONE NIGHT LIZARD

*Xantusia gracilis*

Family: XANTUSIIDAE  
R094

Order: SQUAMATA

Class: REPTILIA

Prepared by: CWHR Staff, July 2005 (based on account for *X. henshawi*)

#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

First described by Grismer and Galvan (1986) as a subspecies of *X. henshawi*, *X. gracilis* has now been elevated to full species status (Lovitch 2001). Distribution is restricted to the Truckhaven Rocks in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in San Diego County (Stebbins 2003).

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Eats insects and some vegetable matter (Brattstrom 1952, Stebbins 1954). Does not actively forage in the open.

**Cover:** Utilizes small burrows in addition to exfoliating sandstone or siltstone for cover (Grismer and Galvan 1986).

**Reproduction:** Reproductive activities take place under cover of sandstone or siltstone or in burrows.

**Water:** Probably not required.

**Pattern:** The presence of rocky refugia is the most important habitat requirement for this species.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

**Activity Patterns:** The species is diurnal and secretive, spending most of its time in rock crevices, under flakes or in burrows. In the heat of summer, lizards may be active in late afternoon and early evening. Becomes active in early to mid-spring and remains active until late summer or early fall (Klauber 1926, Stebbins 1954, Lee 1974, Mautz and Case 1974).

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** No data.

**Home Range:** No data.

**Territory:** No data.

**Reproduction:** Copulation occurs in May and June and egg development takes about 3 months. Broods of one or two are born live in September (Shaw 1949, Stebbins 1954).

**Niche:** Predators probably include the larger rock-dwelling lizards (*Crotaphytus*, *Sceloporus*), snakes, and predatory birds.

**General Comments:** Geographic isolation and an extremely limited distribution places the species at higher risk for extinction than others. Careful monitoring and conservation strategies unique to this species are recommended (Lovich 2001).

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