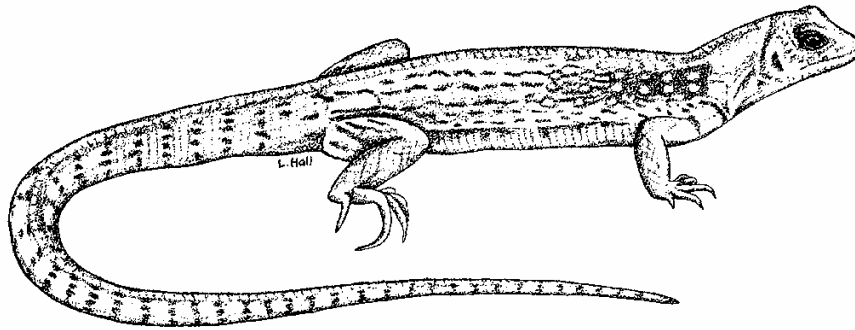


**Species Notes for
Desert Iguana (*Dipsosaurus dorsalis*):**

**California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System
Level II Model Prototype**



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PREFACE

This document is part of the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System, operated and maintained by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) in cooperation with the California Interagency Wildlife Task Group (CIWTG). The information will be useful for environmental assessments and wildlife habitat management. For more information on the CWHR System and all of its components, please see <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cwahr/>.

Notes such as these were prepared for 32 species by the US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station as part of a 2000/2001 contract with CDFG. Each is part of a prototypical “Level II” model for a species. As compared with the “Level I” or matrix models initially available in the CWHR System, “Level II” models incorporate spatial issues such as size of a habitat patch and distance between suitable habitat patches.

The notes are divided into three major sections. First, “Distribution, Seasonality and Habitats” represents information in the existing Geographic Information System (GIS) range data and in the Level I matrix model for a species. There is a vector-based GIS layer of geographic range and seasonality for each species in CWHR as well as a matrix containing all suitability ratings – High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or Unsuitable (-) – by habitat (e.g. BOW or Blue Oak Woodland), stage (e.g. 4P or small tree, open canopy) and life requisite (reproduction, cover, or feeding.). Tools such as “Bioview” within the CWHR software will return these suitability ratings for a species to a user-supplied data set containing habitats and either stages (e.g. 4P) or stage values (e.g. trees of 16.0 average diameter at breast height in a stand of 30% canopy closure).

Second, “Required Attributes of Suitable Habitat Patches” represents spatially-explicit requirements of a species. The information here builds upon what is known about habitat patch size and the most critical attributes of a habitat patch needed by an individual of the species. Applications such as “GRABS”, which stands for “Grouping Resources Algorithm for Biological Data Sets”, will “clump” pixels of a user-supplied raster-based GIS data set representing patches of a suitable habitat and stage for a species. It will calculate area, perimeter, and complexity within each patch and analyze its outside edge for juxtaposition with other habitats and stages of interest. Many of the attributes are what were once called “elements” in the CWHR model.

Third, “Spatial Habitat Requirements for Persistence of Population” represents estimates of the amount of habitat needed to maintain a population of a species. This may be considered the starting point for a “Level III” CWHR model, which would take into account spatial issues as well as a number of population parameters not yet incorporated into CWHR. Such information is included for most, but not all, Level II-modeled species.

R010 Desert Iguana *Dipsosaurus dorsalis*

Distribution, Seasonality and Habitats

<i>Model Parameter</i>	<i>Threshold Value(s) for Species</i>
<p><u>Biogeographic Range and Seasonality</u> range of the species, by season, in the state</p>	Species is widely distributed in the Mojave and Colorado deserts below 1000 meters. It is active only when temperatures are warm and hatching success may well depend on nest temperatures.
<p><u>Suitable Habitats</u> habitats rated in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System as high (H), medium (M), or low (L) suitability for reproduction, cover, or feeding</p>	Species finds suitability (H --->L) for reproduction, cover and/or feeding in some or all stages of: Alkali Desert Scrub, Desert Riparian, Desert Scrub, Desert Succulent Shrub, Desert Wash, Joshua Tree, Palm Oasis, and Pinyon – Juniper.
<p><u>Water</u> whether water is required, enhances, or is irrelevant for habitat suitability</p>	Water is irrelevant for suitability. Species has physiological abilities to conserve water when cooling or when voiding metabolic wastes.

Required Attributes of Suitable Habitat Patches

<i>Model Parameter</i>	<i>Threshold Value(s) for Species</i>
<p><u>Patch Size</u> L = low suitability. This is the minimum patch size for persistence of an individual. H = high suitability. Above this patch size, area alone does not increase habitat suitability for an individual.</p>	0.5 acre (L) 10 acres (H)

<p><u>Edges</u> requirements for a transition between two life form types – tree/shrub, tree/grass, tree/water, tree/agricultural, shrub/grass, shrub/water, shrub/agricultural, grass/water, grass/agricultural, or water/agricultural</p>	<p>A shrub/grass edge is preferred.</p>
<p><u>Structural Habitat Attributes</u> requirements for live vegetation, dead or decadent vegetation, vegetation residues, physical features, or human-made features</p>	<p>Species requires a shrub layer or herbaceous layer for feeding; and burrows, friable soils and aerated soils for reproduction and cover (to avoid harsh hot and cool temperatures and escape predators).</p> <p>Most highly suitable habitats appear to be desert shrub habitats with soils suitable for burrowing and good herbaceous growth for foraging (although also forages in shrubs).</p>
<p><u>Food</u> vegetative or animal diet requirements</p>	<p>Essential diet items include forbs, shrubs, berries, fruits or flowers. Invertebrates, especially terrestrial insects, and carrion are also consumed.</p>

Spatial Habitat Requirements for Persistence of Population

Lowest suitability = 100 acres, if suitable patches cover at least 75% of area, are of a minimum size (see above), and are a maximum of 30 meters apart

Highest suitability = greater than 500 acres, if suitable patches cover at least 75% of area, are of a minimum size (see above), and are less than 10 meters apart