

Northern Tree Lizard - *Urosaurus ornatus wrighti*

Abundance: Extremely rare

Status: NSS1 (Aa)

NatureServe: G5 S2

Population Status: Imperiled due to greatly restricted numbers and distribution, extirpation is possible.

Limiting Factor: Habitat: species is only found in the Flaming Gorge Region. Habitat has undergone significant loss. Additional habitat loss is ongoing due to energy development.

Comment: This species has been elevated to NSS1 status because of low population densities, greatly restricted range, and ongoing habitat loss. Standard name changed from Cliff Tree Lizard. Reptile surveys conducted within the Flaming Gorge region yielded few Northern Tree Lizard observations.

Introduction

In Wyoming, Northern Tree Lizards occur only in southwestern Sweetwater County near the state line (Baxter and Stone 1985). Its diet consists of spiders and a variety of insects, including aphids, beetles, flies, ants, termites, and grasshoppers (Stebbins 2003). Northern Tree Lizards are active from April through October. They bask in the sun throughout most of the day. However, shaded perches are used during the hottest parts of the afternoon. Females lay 1 to 2 clutches of 2 to 16 eggs in July; hatchlings emerge in August (Hammerson 1999, Stebbins 2003). Winters are presumably spent underground and may be spent with aggregations of tree lizards (Hammerson 1999).

Habitat

Northern Tree Lizards inhabit rocky cliffs, canyon walls, steep exposures of bedrock, and large boulders in sagebrush and juniper habitats (Baxter and Stone 1985, Hammerson 1999).

Problems

- h Increased oil and gas development will likely lead to habitat alteration or loss.
- h Lack of basic information on the species presence, distribution, and ecology in Wyoming.

Conservation Actions

- h Survey and monitor population distribution, status, and habitat associations.
- h Develop management recommendations based on resulting data.

Monitoring/Research

Conduct baseline surveys to gain a better understanding of Northern Tree Lizard distribution in Wyoming.

Recent Developments

Reptiles have received increased attention in Wyoming. Incidental observations are encouraged to be reported to the herpetology program.

References

- Stebbins, R.C. 2003. *A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians*. Third Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 336 pp.
- Baxter, G.T. and M.D. Stone. 1985. *Amphibians and Reptiles of Wyoming*. Second Edition. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 137pp.
- Hammerson, G.A. 1999. *Amphibians and Reptiles in Colorado: A Colorado Field Guide*, Second Edition. University Press of Colorado and Colorado Division of Wildlife. 484 pp.

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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.