

# Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard (*Gambelia silus*)



John Brode (CDFG)

Updated: October 2002

# Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard Characteristics



John Brode (CDFG)

- Cryptic coloration of patterned bars and spots, dark gray or brown with cream or yellow crossbands on the back (“Leopard-like”).
- Broad, triangular-shaped head and truncate snout.
- Body length is 750-1250 mm (3-5 in.). Rounded tail, longer than body.
- Color and spot patterns intensify during the breeding season.

# Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard Behavior

- Diurnal.
- Active when ambient temperatures reach 25-35° C (77-95° F) and soil temperatures reach 30-50° C (86-122° F).
- BNLL use rodent burrows for shelter.
- Hibernates in Winter and are active Mid-Spring to Mid-Fall.

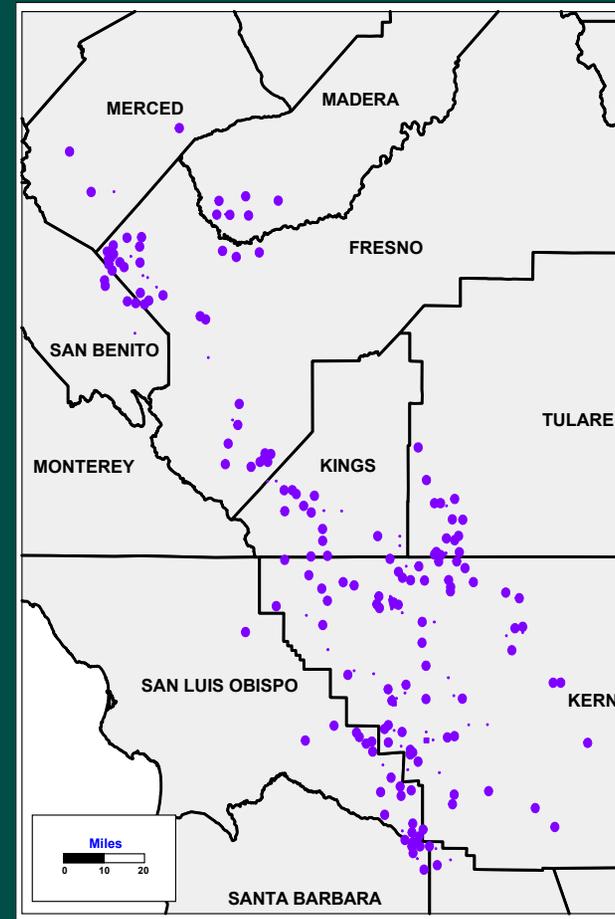


B. "Moose" Peterson/WRP

# Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard

## Currently Occupied Habitat

- Preferred habitats: Alkali flats and sparsely vegetated plains.
- Can be found from 30 to 730 m above sea level (100-2200 feet).
- Counties: Merced, Madera, Fresno, San Benito, Kings, Tulare, Kern, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura.



# Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard Preferred Habitats



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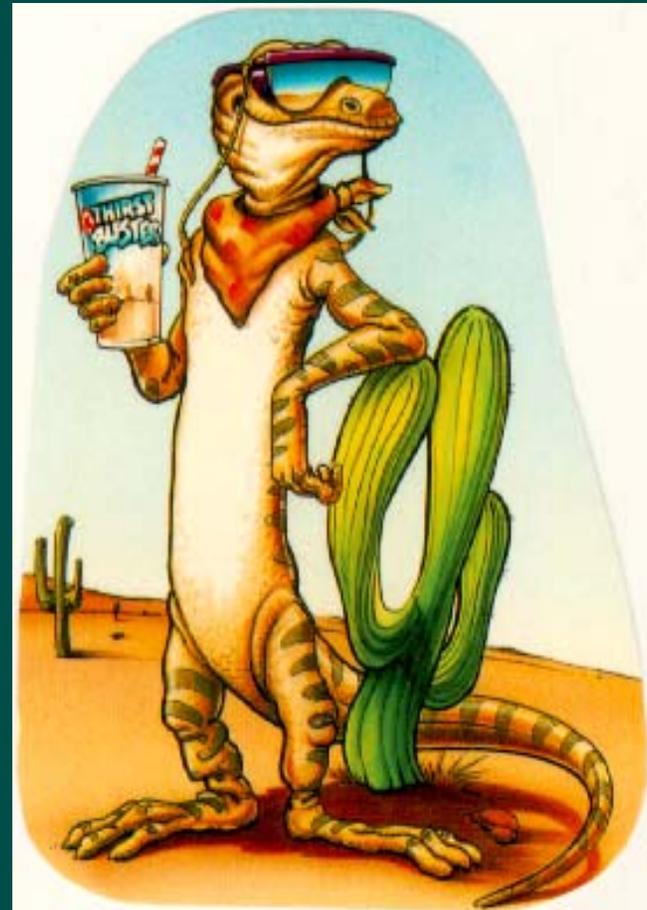
# Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard Reproduction

- BNLLs breed from May to mid-June.
- Females develop orange-reddish spots on sides and thighs.
- Males develop bright, pink coloration on their sides.
- Males are very territorial during breeding.
- Females lay the eggs in old rodent burrows.
- They lay two or more clutches/year, with 2 eggs per clutch.
- Young hatch in July and August.

# Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard

## Food and Water

- BNLLs are insectivorous, they eat grasshoppers, cicadas, and other insects.
- Occasionally they will supplement their diet with small lizards.
- They don't appear to require free water.



# Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard Mortality Factors

- Predation: by bigger Leopard Lizards, Kit Fox, Skunks, Whipsnakes, Gopher Snakes, Loggerhead Shrikes and various diurnal Raptors.
- Burrow destruction: agricultural activities or urban development.
- Possibly from burrow fumigation.

# Rodent Control and Protection of Burrowing Non-target Species

- When possible, try baiting first.
- If baiting doesn't work, then try burrow fumigation.
- Before fumigating burrows, make sure you are targeting active Ground Squirrel burrows.

# How do we know it is an active Ground Squirrel burrow?

- Often active Ground Squirrel burrows have large deposits of dirt accumulated around their entrance. However, not all burrows show such deposits at the entrance and have to be monitored more closely.



- Look also for debris such as nutshells, fruit rinds, and scat dispersed near the entrance.

- Inactive burrows typically have cobwebs at the entrance.

Photos: Paul Gorenzel, UC Davis

# How do we know it is an active Ground Squirrel burrow?



- Look for tracks (see pictures).
- If the substrate is hard, try softening up the area around the entrance by wetting it down, thus forming a “mud plate”. Track plates made by smoking aluminum or tin sheets can also be used. Chalk can also be spread around the entrance, this creates a “more durable” soft surface where tracks can be observed.

Photo: Paul Gorenzel, UC Davis

# Burrow Fumigant Use Limitations

(per Interim Measures County Bulletins)

- Use Limitation Code 5: “Use shall be supervised by a person (wildlife biologist, county agricultural commissioner, university extension advisor, state or federal official or others) who is trained to distinguish dens and burrows of target species from those of non-target species. Use shall occur only in the active burrows of target species. The person responsible for supervision shall be aware of the conditions at the site of application and be available to direct and control the manner in which applications are made (per Section 6406 of Title 3, California Code of Regulations). Contact your county agricultural commissioner for information on training.”