

Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard (*Gambelia silus*)

Status -- Federal: Endangered ; California: Endangered

Photo: B. "Moose" Peterson/WRP



The blunt-nosed leopard lizard is relatively large, measuring 3 to 5 inches in body length. It has a broad, triangular-shaped head and truncate snout. Its tail is rounded and longer than the body. Its body coloration resembles that of a leopard, with a pattern of bars and spots, dark grey or brown with cream or yellow crossbands on the back. During the breeding season, females develop red-orange markings on the sides of the head and body and the undersides of the

body and limbs. Breeding males may also develop such markings, however, in males this coloration may persist indefinitely.

Blunt-nosed leopard lizards prefer Alkali flats and sparsely vegetated plains of the San Joaquin Valley. They use small mammal burrows for shelter. However, if such burrows are scarce, they may also construct tunnels under exposed rocks or earth berms.

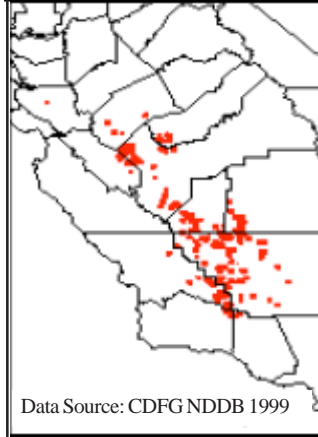


Photo: John Brode, CDFG

California Department of Pesticide Regulation
Endangered Species Program
<https://www.cdpr.ca.gov>



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Distribution

Blunt-nosed leopard lizards can be found at elevations ranging from 30 m (100 ft) to 790 m (2600 ft) above sea level. The California Department of Fish and Game's Natural Diversity Data Base lists currently occupied habitat in the following Counties: Merced, Madera, Fresno, San Benito, Kings, Tulare, Kern, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura.

Behavior

Blunt-nosed leopard lizards are diurnal, active when ambient temperatures reach 25-35 C (77-95 F) and soil temperatures reach 30-50 C (86-122 F). On hotter days they are

active in the early morning and late afternoon.

Blunt-nosed leopard lizards hibernate in Winter and are active mid-Spring to mid-Fall. After they emerge in March or April, adults remain active until the end of June or July, whereas juveniles hatch in August and remain active into September or October.

Reproduction

Blunt-nosed leopard lizards breed from April through mid-June. Males are very territorial during breeding. Male and female pairs can be seen together and often occupying the same burrow systems. Females usually lay eggs between May and June. The usual clutch size is 3 eggs, but may range from 2 to 6. Normally one clutch is produced per year, however, depending on environmental conditions, they may produce a second clutch. Young hatch after a two-month incubation.

Food and Water

Blunt-nosed leopard lizards are insectivorous, they eat grasshoppers, cicadas, and other insects. Occasionally they will supplement their diet with small lizards (including smaller leopard lizards). Apparently they don't require water.