

## Great Basin Skink - *Plestiodon skiltonianus* *utahensis*

Abundance: Unknown

Status: NSSU

NatureServe: G5 SNR

Population Status: Unknown. Recently discovered in 2010 adjacent to Cokeville, WY. Only two individuals documented in the state.

Limiting Factor: Habitat: habitat and range likely restricted in range within the state.

Comment: Species recently documented within the state and was not incorporated into 2005 CWCS.

### Introduction

The Great Basin Skink was first documented in Wyoming during the spring of 2010 near Cokeville. Following initial discovery, another Great Basin Skink was documented along the Smith's Fork of the Bear River. This species is likely active from late April through October. On average, females lay 2-10 eggs from June to July (Stebbins 2003). Females remain with the nest, and have been known to fend off predators and repair damaged nests (Werner et al. 2004). Eggs typically hatch in late July and August. Great Basin Skinks feed primarily on small invertebrates. Skinks can burrow in loose soil, but tend to use existing burrows for nesting and cover (Werner et al. 2004). This species is very cryptic and may easily be overlooked.

### Habitat

In Wyoming, the Great Basin Skink has only been documented in Lincoln County. This species prefers coniferous forests, rock outcroppings, talus slopes, and open areas between forest stands (Werner et al. 2004). The Great Basin Skink prefers rocky habitat near streams with abundant vegetative cover (Stebbins 2003). However, this species may also be observed on dry hillsides, distant from water.

### Problems

h Lack of basic information on the species presence, distribution, and ecology in Wyoming.

### Conservation Actions

h Research critical life history and habitat information needs

h Survey and monitor population distribution, status, and habitat associations.

### Monitoring/Research

Conduct baseline surveys to gain better understanding of species distribution within the state.

### Recent Developments

Species first documented in the state during the spring of 2010. Additional surveys have been conducted to try and elucidate species range.

### References

Stebbins, R.C. 2003. A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians. Third Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 336 pp.

Werner, J.K., B.A. Maxwell, P. Hendricks, and D.L. Flath. 2004. Amphibians and Reptiles of Montana. Mountain Press Publishing Company, Missoula. 262pp.

Great Basin Skink (*Plestiodon skiltonianus utahensis*)

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 heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence. There were too few occurrence points to construct a distribution model. Collection of additional occurrence locations are necessary for assessment of potential distribution in Wyoming.