

Greater Short-horned Lizard - *Phrynosoma hernandesi*

Abundance: Rare

Status: NSS4 (Bc)

NatureServe: G5 S4

Population Status: Widely distributed, but vulnerable due to range-wide population declines.

Limiting Factor: Habitat: although habitat is not restricted, ongoing human activities will likely result in habitat loss.

Comment: Subspecies was dropped from 2005 CWCS. Formerly *Phrynosoma hernandesi hernandesi*.

Introduction

Greater Short-horned Lizards range throughout Wyoming. Although identified as common, anecdotal evidence indicates many populations are in decline throughout this species' range. Greater Short-horned Lizards are active from May to September or October. They forage diurnally on insects (beetles, termites, grasshoppers, caterpillars, etc.) and prefer ants (Baxter and Stone 1985, Stebbins 2003). Greater Short-horned Lizards bear live young from June to August, with litters ranging in size from 5 to 48 (Baxter and Stone 1985, Stebbins 2003). They overwinter in the banks of washes with relatively steep slopes at specific sites with bare and penetrable substrate. They probably overwinter around 1m under the soil and do not show a tendency to aggregate for the winter (Mathies and Martin 2008).

Habitat

Greater Short-horned Lizards range from semiarid plains to the mountains; they can be found in shortgrass prairie and sagebrush habitats, and open pine-spruce, pinon-juniper, and spruce-fir forests. The ground may be stony, sandy, or firm, but usually has fine loose soil present, in which the lizards burrow (Stebbins 2003).

Problems

- h Ongoing human activities throughout the state will likely result in habitat loss for this species.
- 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

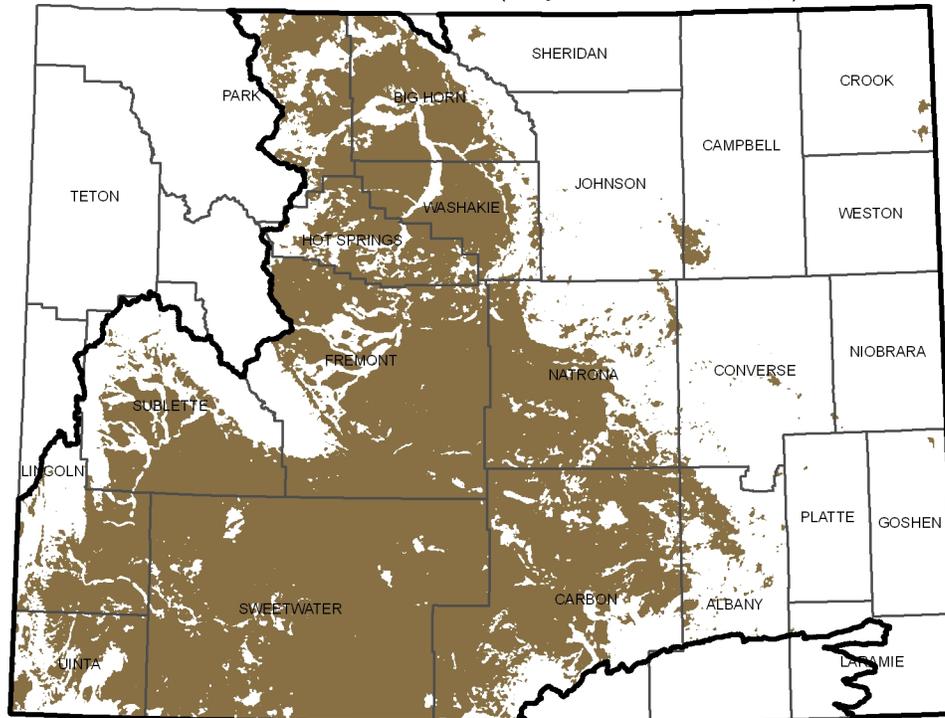
Conduct baseline surveys to gain a better understanding of Greater Short-horned Lizard distribution in Wyoming.

Recent Developments

Reptiles have received increased attention in Wyoming. Incidental observations are encouraged to be reported to the herpetology program. Baseline reptile and amphibian surveys were conducted in southwest Wyoming during the summer of 2009. Greater Short-horned Lizard distribution and habitat associations are being examined.

References

- Mathies, T., and D.J. Martin. 2008. Overwintering site selection by short-horned lizards (*Phrynosoma hernandesi*) in northeastern Colorado. *Journal of Herpetology* 42:163-171.
- Baxter, G.T. and M.D. Stone. 1985. *Amphibians and Reptiles of Wyoming*. Second Edition. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 137pp.
- Stebbins, R.C. 2003. *A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians*. Third Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 533pp.

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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.