

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Animal Abstract

Element Code: ARACJ02300

Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Aspidoscelis pai* (Wright and Lowe, 1993)

COMMON NAME: Pai Striped Whiptail

SYNONYMS: *Aspidoscelis inornata pai* (Wright and Lowe, 1993); *Cnemidophorus inornatus pai* Wright and Lowe, 1993; *C. pai* Wright and Lowe, 1993

FAMILY: Teiidae, Sauria

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Wright, J.W., and C.H. Lowe. 1993. Synopsis of the subspecies of the little striped whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus inornatus* Baird. Journal of the Arizona-Nevada Academy of Science 27: 129-157.

TYPE LOCALITY: "...Hermit Basin in Grand Canyon, 4800 ft, Coconino County, Arizona," U.S.A.

TYPE SPECIMEN: HT: UAZ 5510, adult male. Charles H. Lowe Field No. 5782, August 22, 1953. Topoparatypes: UAZ 5511 (adult female) and LACM 13065 (adult male).

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: As Crother et al. reports in their SSAR 2003 update to the 2002 edition, *Cnemidophorus*, as previously circumscribed, is not monophyletic as presented by Reeder et al. (2002, Am. Mus. Novit. 3365: 1-61). Thus they resurrected *Aspidoscelis* for the clade composed of the species native to North America, and the whiptails from South America retain the genus *Cnemidophorus*. The species *A. pai* is 1 of 22 in North America and 1 of 11 in Arizona, including the non-native *A. neomexicana*.

DESCRIPTION: A small, slender lizard up to 8.5 cm (3.4 in) long, with a long, thin and bright blue tail. They are black, dark brown to reddish brown in color with six light cream to yellow colored dorsal stripes, although some have an incomplete or very thin mid-dorsal (seventh) stripe. The ventor is blue in both sexes, although extremely deep blue to purplish-blue in males. Both the scales are the midbody and the femoral pores are intermediate (Wright and Lowe, 1993). The distinguishing characteristics include pale blue coloration on the face, feet, and underside, a lack of spots, and usually 2-3 enlarged preanals (enlarged scales in front of the vent). (Wright and Lowe, 1993; AZ PARC, 2006; Brennan and Holycross, 2006).

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION: The similar looking *Aspidoscelis arizonae* (Arizona Striped Whiptail) has seven complete stripes.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

Colored photo (Brennan and Holycross 2006: p. 83)

Colored photos (Erik F. Enderson, in Tucson Herpetological Society Lizards at <http://www.arts.arizona.edu/herps/ASPA.html>).

Colored photos (<http://www.californiherps.com/noncal/southwest/swlizards/pages/a.pai.html>)

Colored photo (Randy Babb, in <http://www.reptilesfaz.com/Lizards-Subpages/h-a-pai.html>)

Photo of holo- and allotypes (Wright and Lowe 1993: Fig. 11, P. 150).

TOTAL RANGE: Endemic to Arizona. From the Grand Canyon and the Coconino Plateau eastward onto the Navajo Reservation; an apparently disjunct population occurs in the Mazatzal Mountains, Gila County, Arizona (Wright and Lowe 1993). According to NatureServe (2006), "Persons and Wright (1999) documented the occurrence of a population of the *A. inornata* group, most closely resembling *A. pai*, in Petrified Forest National Park (Navajo and Apache counties, northeastern Arizona).

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: See "Total Range."

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: Although diurnal, this alert fast moving lizard is most active in the morning. It forages for food by digging in leaf litter and under rocks and logs.

REPRODUCTION: This species is allopatric with mating occurring in the spring. Females lay one or two clutches of 1-3 eggs each in late spring or early summer.

FOOD HABITS: Forages for insects, spiders, centipedes, and hatchling lizards.

HABITAT: Inhabits chaparral and woodland, with an upper limit in ponderosa pine parkland (Wright and Lowe 1993, in NatureServe 2006). Brennan and Holycross (2006), report that this lizard is "Found primarily in Plains and Great Basin grassland, but also occurs in Interior Chaparral, Great Basin Conifer Woodland, and Petran Montane Conifer Forest."

ELEVATION: Inhabits elevations from 4,800 – 6,400 feet (2,414-3,219 m).

PLANT COMMUNITY: Plains and Great Basin grassland, Interior Chaparral, Great Basin Conifer Woodland, and Petran Montane Conifer Forest.

POPULATION TRENDS: The total adult population size is unknown. Short-term trends have not been documented, but the extent of occurrence, area of occupancy, number of subpopulations, and population size probably are relatively stable. No major threats have been identified. Some occurrences are within the Grand Canyon National Park (Wright and Low 1993), and are appropriately protected and managed. (NatureServe 2006).

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS: None
STATE STATUS: None
OTHER STATUS: None

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: None

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN: Several populations located on the Grand Canyon National Park, thus affording the overall population somewhat of protection.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Population studies to determine full distribution in state, along with life history studies.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: BIA – Navajo Nation; NPS – Grand Canyon and Petrified Forest National Parks; USFS – Tonto National Forest.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

- AZ PARC. 2006. Reptiles of Arizona: Pai Striped Whiptail – *Aspidoscelis pai*. <http://www.reptilesfaz.com/Lizards-Subpages/h-a-pai.html>. Accessed 10/25/2006.
- Brennan, T.C., and A.T. Holycross. April 2006. A Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles in Arizona. Arizona Game and Fish Department. Phoenix, Arizona. pp. 82-83.
- Crother, B.I., et al. 2003. Scientific and Standard English Names of Amphibians and Reptiles of North America North of Mexico: Update. Herpetological Review, 2003, 34(3), 196-203. Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles.
- NatureServe. 2006. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.0. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: October 25, 2006).
- Reeder, T.W., C.J. Cole, and H.C. Dessauer. 2002. Phylogenetic Relationships of Whiptail Lizards of the Genus *Cnemidophorus* (Squamata: Teiidae): A Test of Monophyly, Reevaluation of Karyotypic Evolution, and Review of Hybrid Origins. American Museum Novitates, Number 3365, 61 pp., 7 figures, 3 tables.
- Stebbins, R.C. 2003. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. Third edition. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston, Massachusetts. Pp. 319-320.
- Wright, J.W., and C.H. Lowe. 1993. Synopsis of the subspecies of the Little Stripped Whiptail lizard, *Cnemidophorus inornatus* Baird. Journal of the Arizona-Nevada Academy of Science. Vol. 27(1): 129-157.

MAJOR KNOWLEDGEABLE INDIVIDUALS:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Origin of Scientific Name (Reeder et al. 2002):

Aspidozelis – Greek nouns *aspido*, meaning “shield”, and *zelis*, meaning “rib” or “leg”, which refers to the large scales on the legs.

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