ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HERITAGE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Animal Abstract **Element Code:** ARACH01061
Data Sensitivity: No

CLASSIFICATION, NOMENCLATURE, DESCRIPTION, RANGE

NAME: *Eumeces gilberti arizonensis*
COMMON NAME: Arizona Skink
SYNONYMS:
FAMILY: Sauria: Scincidae

AUTHOR, PLACE OF PUBLICATION: *E. g. arizonensis* Lowe and Shannon, Herpetologica 10: 185-187. 1954.

TYPE LOCALITY: Hassayampa River, 5 miles SE Wickenburg, Maricopa Co. AZ.

TYPE SPECIMEN: Unknown.

TAXONOMIC UNIQUENESS: About 38 species in the genus, which occurs in the Old and New Worlds and Asia. Five subspecies in *E. gilberti*, two of which occur in Arizona and include *rubricaudatus* and *arizonensis*.

DESCRIPTION: A medium sized lizard with snout to vent lengths of 2.0 – 4.5 inches (5-11 cm). Their limbs are small relative to their body size. They have a shiny, plain gray brown to olive tan coloring. Some adults have reddish orange coloration on the head and tail. Young animals have light and dark striping on the body, and orange to pink coloration under the tail. Most adults lack striping entirely. Stebbins (1966) and Behler and King (1979), both report that *E. g. arizonensis* adults tend to retain juvenile striped pattern.

AIDS TO IDENTIFICATION:

ILLUSTRATIONS: Color drawing (Stebbins 1966: plate 24)
Color photo (Behler and King 1979: plates 430,434)
Color photo (Tom Brennan, http://www.reptilesofaz.com/h-e-gilberti.html)
Color photo of species (Robert Hansen, http://www.enature.com/fieldguide/)

TOTAL RANGE: The **species** occurs in California, south along Sierra Nevada and Coastal ranges from the San Francisco Bay to northern Baja California. Isolated populations occur in

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the Mountains of southeast California, southern Nevada, and west and west-central Arizona. The **subspecies** *arizonensis* occurs in west-central Arizona.

RANGE WITHIN ARIZONA: West-central Arizona. Distribution is largely uncertain; currently documented only from riparian habitats along the perennial reaches of the Hassayampa River and its tributaries below Wickenburg in Maricopa County (AGFD in prep). Other areas that it has been reported from includes the Bradshaw and Santa Maria mountains, Yavapai Co.; Burro Creek ca. 15km west Bagdad, Mohave Co.; Hualapai and Aquarius mountains, Mohave Co.

SPECIES BIOLOGY AND POPULATION TRENDS

BIOLOGY: Arizona skinks are secretive diurnal lizards that spend most of their time under rocks and logs.

REPRODUCTION: An oviparous lizard, laying 5-9 eggs in an underground burrow/den during mid-summer.

FOOD HABITS: The Arizona skink eats insects and spiders.

HABITAT: Occurs among rocks, logs and leaf litter near permanent or semi-permanent streams, in habitats ranging from mesquite riparian drainages up through oak and into pine woodlands. In the Bradshaw Mountains, they can be found in evergreen woodland and pine forests, while along the Hassayampa River, they are found in riparian woodland habitats.

ELEVATION: 1,865 – 1,970 ft (569-601 m).

PLANT COMMUNITY: Unknown

POPULATION TRENDS: Unknown but believed to be locally common and probably stable. May be severely decreasing in some localities.

SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT STATUS: None (USDI, FWS 1996)
[C2 USDI, FWS 1994]
[C2 USDI, FWS 1991]
[C2 USDI, FWS 1989]
[3C USDI, FWS 1985]

STATE STATUS: WSC (AGFD, WSCA in prep)
[State Endangered (AGFD, TNW 1988)]

OTHER STATUS: Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS Region

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[Forest Service Sensitive (USDA, FS Region 3 1988)]
None (USDI, BLM AZ 2005)
[Bureau of Land Management Sensitive (USDI, BLM AZ 2000)]

MANAGEMENT FACTORS: *E.g. arizonensis* has a limited distribution. Habitat loss in riparian localities is a concern. Threats include water diversion and habitat destruction, including loss of flood-deposited debris used as cover (AGFD in prep).

PROTECTIVE MEASURES TAKEN: Habitat acquisition of perennial reach of Hassayampa River by TNC.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS: Distribution, habitat, population and life history studies.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: TNC – Hassayampa River Preserve; Private.

SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

Arizona Game and Fish Department. 1988. Threatened native wildlife in Arizona. Arizona Game and Fish Department Publication. Phoenix, Arizona. p. 11.

Arizona Game and Fish Department. In prep. Wildlife of special concern in Arizona. Arizona Game and Fish Department Publication. Phoenix, Arizona. 32pp.

Behler, J.L. and F.W. King. 1979. The Audubon Society field guide to North American reptiles and amphibians. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. Pp. 571-572.

Biota Information System of New Mexico (BISON). 2002. BISON Species Account 030197, Arizona Sink, *Eumeces gilberti arizonensis* . New Mexico Game & Fish, http://www.cmiweb.org/states/nmex_main/species/030197.htm.

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