Florida Keys mole skink

*Plestiodon egregius egregius*

(Photo by Kevin Enge, FWC)

**Taxonomic Classification**

Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Chordata  
Class: Reptilia  
Order: Squamata  
Family: Scincidae  
Genus/Species: *Plestiodon egregius*  
Subspecies: *Plestiodon egregius egregius*  
Common Name: Florida Keys mole skink

**Listing Status**

Federal Status: Not Listed  
FL Status: State Species of Special Concern  
FNAI Rank: G4T2/S2 (Globally: Apparently Secured, Sub sp. Imperiled/ State: Imperiled)  
IUCN Status: Not ranked

**Physical Description**

The Florida Keys mole skink is a small brown lizard that can reach a length of five inches (12.7 centimeters) (Christman 1992). This species has a brownish-colored body with a pink-tinted tail, and two or more light-colored lines that extend from the head down the body, sometimes extending to the tail. The legs of this species are small and have five toes on each foot (Florida Natural Areas Inventory 2001).
Life History

The diet of the Florida Keys mole skink primarily consists of small arthropods including roaches, spiders, and crickets (Mount 1963).

Little is known about the reproduction of the Florida Keys mole skink. Females lay a clutch of three to five eggs in underground nests between the months of April and June (Mount 1963, Bartlett and Bartlett 1999). Eggs hatch 31-51 days after being laid. Females remain with the eggs until they hatch for protection. This species usually reaches maturity at the age of one year (Christman 1992).

Habitat & Distribution

The Florida Keys mole skink is a secretive species that inhabits sandy areas under rocks, leaf litter, and tidal wracks (line of washed up vegetation on the beach that consists of dead seaweed and marsh grass) (Carr 1940, Duellman and Schwartz 1958, Christman 1992). This species can be found in the Florida Keys in Dry Tortugas, Key West, Stock Island, Middle Torch Key, Big Pine Key, Key Vaca, Grassy Key, Upper Matecumbe Key, Indian Key, and Key Largo (Christman 1992).

Threats

The Florida Keys mole skink faces many threats to its populations such as the destruction of habitat in the Florida Keys. Development along the shoreline has been the main cause of the destruction of habitat. Severe hurricanes are also a threat to the mole skink because of storm surge, flooding, and increased wind speeds (Mount 1963). Potential sea level rise could also affect mole skink habitat found along the shoreline and other low lying areas due to inundation of water.

Conservation & Management

The Florida Keys mole skink is protected as a State Species of Special Concern by Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species Rule.

-Biological Status Review (BSR)
-Supplemental Information for the BSR
Other Informative Links

Florida Natural Areas Inventory

References


