

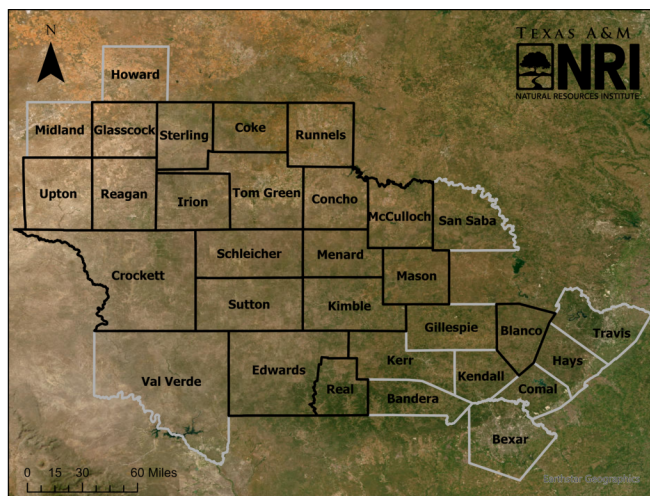
THE PLATEAU SPOT-TAILED EARLESS LIZARD BENEFITS FROM RANGE MANAGEMENT



WHAT IS THE PLATEAU SPOT-TAILED EARLESS LIZARD?

Recently, researchers with Texas A&M University's Natural Resources Institute, in partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, conducted a range management study on an Edwards Plateau native, the Plateau Spot-tailed Earless Lizard (*Holbrookia lacerata*). This is the only lizard species with its entire distribution in Texas.

This species spends most of its time on the ground or perched on rocks, basking in the sun and prefers grassland habitats with interspersed bare ground patches (see reverse).



RANGE BY COUNTY. BLACK COUNTIES HAVE RECENT OBSERVATIONS AND GREY INDICATES THE HISTORICAL RANGE

HOW TO IDENTIFY THE PLATEAU SPOT-TAILED EARLESS LIZARD

This small species is named for the black spots on the underside of their tail (left, bottom). While their bellies are cream or white, their backs are tan to brown with a pattern of darker brown blotches (left, top).

The Plateau Spot-tailed Earless Lizard is most active during late spring through summer, which coincides with their breeding season. Females will show orange patches on their necks and may appear to be dusted in yellow during the height of breeding season.

The hatchlings begin to appear in late June through early August. Their patterns are identical to adults, but often faint at first. They start life at about an inch in length, but will reach adulthood by the following spring breeding season.



THE DORSAL AND UNDERSIDE PATTERNS OF A PLATEAU SPOT-TAILED EARLESS LIZARD

AGRILIFE, SONORA STATION

WHERE ARE THESE LIZARDS FOUND IN RANGELANDS?

In the recent study, researchers surveyed for this species in sites that had undergone common rangeland management practices. These practices include areas subject to grazing (right, A), prescribed burns (right, B), both burns and grazing, and areas with no grazing or burning (bottom left).

The surveys revealed that lizards were found more frequently in areas that were burned, grazed, or a combination of the two as opposed to areas where none of these practices were occurring.



HABITAT WHERE THE PLATEAU SPOT-TAILED EARLESS LIZARD HAS BEEN FOUND

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LIZARDS AVOID DENSE JUNIPER STANDS LIKE THIS

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WHICH HABITAT FEATURES ARE THE LIZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH?

The Plateau Spot-tailed Earless Lizard prefers a mosaic of vegetation, with lots of open areas and fewer trees. They are often found basking on or near dirt roads. They avoid dense tree stands, particularly dense junipers and oaks. On a small scale, these lizard preferred bare grounds with some forbs and grass, and avoid areas with a lot of leaf litter.



A PLATEAU SPOT-TAILED EARLESS LIZARD WITH A TELEMETRY TAG BASKING ON A ROCK

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What does that mean for landowners in the Edwards Plateau?
If landowners are trying to support local native fauna like the Plateau Spot-tailed Earless Lizard, implementing or maintaining a management plan that includes grazing or burning is a great place to start. Areas without grazing or burning interventions supported significantly fewer lizards.