

Rare Animals of Louisiana

Eastern Glass Lizard

Ophisaurus ventralis

Rarity Rank: S3/G5

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure



Photo by Andrew Hoffman

Identification:

- A snake-like lizard, which lacks legs but has moveable eyelids and external ear openings (these two characteristics serve to distinguish glass lizards from all snakes)
- General body color is gray-green to green
- Whitish or yellowish spots on posterior edge of dorsal scales result in an overall speckled appearance
- Older individuals may develop numerous longitudinal dark lines on back
- Lacks distinct dark mid-dorsal stripes and stripes below the lateral groove
- Tail is easily broken off and the regenerated tip is sharply pointed and of a different color than the body
- Adults are 1 m in total length

Habitat:

- Very good burrowers and thus they often spend a considerable amount of time underground
- Generally found in moist habitats and those with sandy, friable soils

Food habits:

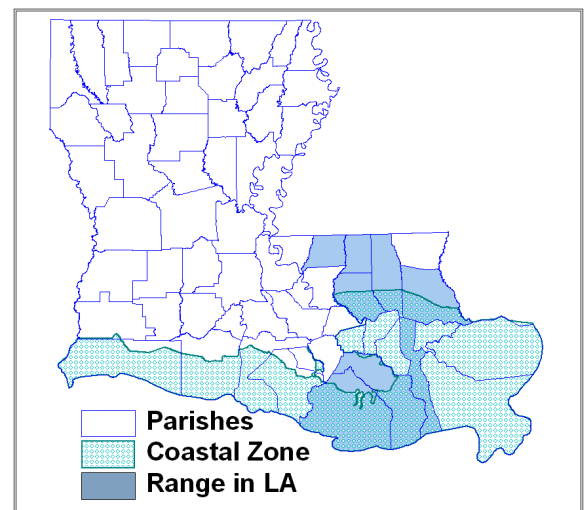
Feed on a variety of insects, snails, bird eggs, and small reptiles

Range:

- Restricted to the southeast coastal plain, from North Carolina south through Florida, west to eastern Louisiana
- In Louisiana, restricted to the Florida Parishes and the eastern coastal region

Reproduction:

- Lays eggs in spring and summer; eggs hatch in two months
- Clutch size of 6 to 17 eggs
- Females stay with eggs during development



Range based on occurrences in Natural Heritage database

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Threats:

- Urban and agricultural expansion may disturb habitats
- Coastal land loss

Beneficial Management Practices:

Actions such as periodic burning and selective cutting may aid in maintaining habitats in some instances

LA River Basins:

Pearl, Pontchartrain, Barataria, Terrebonne

References

NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. 2006. Version 6.1 . Arlington, Virginia, USA: NatureServe. Available: <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: Feb. 19, 2007).