



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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**OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING
Sacramento, CA**

October 27, 2021

STAFF REPORT: Flat-Tail Horned Lizards at Ocotillo Wells SVRA

STAFF: Sara Lockett, Ocotillo Wells District Senior Environmental Scientist

SUBJECT: Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area Flat-Tail Horned Lizard Monitoring Update

Summary

Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) has been conducting long-term monitoring of the flat-tailed horned lizard (FTHL; *Phrynosoma mcallii*) as part of interagency rangewide efforts. In the late 1990s, a listing attempt resulted in the development of a Conservation Agreement among state and federal agencies that manage FTHL habitat. These agencies have established a Rangewide Management Strategy (RMS), project mitigation standards, monitoring protocols, and joint data management. As a signatory member, Ocotillo Wells SVRA has conducted long-term monitoring of flat-tailed horned lizard populations at the park and played a key role in rangewide conservation of this species.

Discussion

The flat-tailed horned lizard is a California Species of Special Concern that has the potential to be present throughout Ocotillo Wells SVRA. While FTHL has never been federally or state listed, numerous attempts have been made to do so. An early attempt resulted in the development of a Conservation Agreement in 1997 between state and federal agencies that are responsible for the management of FTHL habitat. State Parks was a signatory agency, committing both Anza-Borrego Desert State Park® and Ocotillo Wells SVRA.

The Conservation Agreement led to the development of a Rangewide Management Strategy that addresses best practices for protecting and managing lands to maintain self-sustaining populations throughout the species' range. Elements of the RMS include mitigation standards and compensation rates for projects occurring within FTHL habitat, standardized occupancy and demography monitoring protocols,

As signatory members to the Conservation Agreement, Ocotillo Wells SVRA staff conduct both occupancy and demography surveys to monitor FTHL populations within the park. Occupancy surveys allow staff to detect changes in population distribution over time, while demographic surveys are a detailed population census that uses individual data to make inferences about the population. Together these surveys provide a robust look at the population health at the SVRA. Additionally, data is share amongst signatory agencies to foster a better understanding of the FTHL population rangewide.

Commission Action

For information only.

Attachments

None.