

# EMPLOYEE FIELD GUIDE

Maintenance and Construction Guidelines in Environmentally Sensitive Areas

It is against the Department's Strategic Goals for our actions to threaten sensitive resources within our worksite. In order to fulfill our goals, every worker needs to adopt new approaches for construction and maintenance of facilities. These guidelines provide an environmentally sensitive approach which recognizes that often minor adjustments during planning, construction or maintenance activities can yield major benefits to the Department's goals. If you have any questions, please call Kim T. Smith, Chief of the Environmental Resource Studies Branch at (619) 688-0220.



Typical habitat for the flat-tailed horned lizard is sandy desert hardpan or gravel flats with scattered sparse vegetation. It is most commonly found in areas where there is a high density of harvester ants (its favorite food) and fine windblown sand.

This species is threatened by a variety of human disturbances within its highly restricted range caused by extensive off-road vehicle use, sand and gravel mining, in addition to urban and agricultural uses. Relatively few populations exist.

## Flat-tailed Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma mcallii*)

The Flat-tailed Horned Lizard is approximately 2 to 3.25 inches long. It has a medium-sized, flat, oval-shaped wide body with large, pointed scales on the upper body and tail. The tail is long and flattened. The skin on the back is smooth with small spines. There are eight distinct horns that extend from the back of the head. The two central horns are long, slender and sharp. The lower jaw has long, narrow spines and there are two rows of fringe scales on the sides of the body. The lower row of scales are smaller than the upper row. The lizard's skin color varies between a light gray, tan, brown, beige, or

white on the top of the body which matches the sand and soil of its habitat.

What identifies this lizard is a dark stripe down the middle of the back and usually there are dark spots along both sides of the stripe. No other horned lizard has this marking. The underside is white with no distinguishing marks.

The Flat-tailed Horned Lizard is active during the day and is not affected by very hot weather. When threatened, it is capable of running away very quickly. It will often stop and quickly bury itself in soft sand to hide, or run under a low bush or into a rodent den. Its main defense is to remain motionless using its cryptic coloring to blend into the background.

## Species of Special Concern

A Candidate for Listing as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), the flat-tailed horned lizard is also a CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Species of Special Concern and a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Sensitive Species. The CESA makes it unlawful for a person to take a listed animal without a permit. "Take" is defined as, "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or attempt to engage in any such conduct." Through regulations, the term "harm" is defined as "an act which actually kills or injures wildlife. Such an act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, and sheltering."

## Fish and Game Code Section 2580-2589

The civil penalty imposed under this chapter by the department shall not be more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for each bird, mammal, amphibian, reptile, or fish, or for each endangered or threatened species, or each full protected bird, mammal, or fish unlawfully taken, possessed, transported, imported, received, purchased, acquired, or sold. This is civil penalty may be in addition to any other penalty, civil or criminal, provided in this code or otherwise by law.

