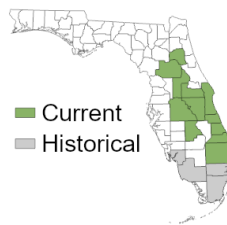


## FLORIDA SCRUB LIZARD

*Sceloporus woodi*

**Order:** Squamata  
**Family:** Phrynosomatidae  
**FNAI Ranks:** G2G3/S2S3  
**U.S. Status:** none  
**FL Status:** none



**Description:** A small, spiny, gray to light-brown lizard with a broad, dark brown stripe on each side of body. Head relatively large; body slightly plump. Female has dark zigzag bars across back and a white belly. Male has plain back and black-edged blue patches on throat and each side of belly. Young are similar to female. Adults to 5.5 in. (140 mm) total length, 2.5 in. (64 mm) body length excluding tail.

**Similar Species:** The closely related southern fence lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus*) lacks brown stripes on its sides. All other native Florida lizards have smoother, less spiny scales and more slender bodies. There are multiple exotic lizards in southeastern Florida that could be mistaken for Florida scrub lizard, but none have a brown stripe down the sides.

**Habitat:** A specialist of xeric scrub communities but can also marginally occupy ecotones with sandhill, scrubby flatwoods, and xeric hammock (Campbell and Christman 1982, Kaunert and McBrayer 2015, Williams and McBrayer 2015, Orton 2017, Enge et al. 2018). Strongly prefers sites with open sandy patches (Hokit et al. 1999, Orton 2017). As habitat suitability decreases, this species increasingly utilizes disturbed sandy edges such as roads, firebreaks, and trails (Orton 2017, Enge et al. 2018).

**Seasonal Occurrence:** Most active from spring to fall. Inactive in cold weather. Activity periods are reduced to morning and late afternoon during the hottest days (Enge et al. 2018). Most easily observed when young are hatching from late June through early November (Jackson and Telford 1974, Enge et al. 2018).

**Florida Distribution:** Endemic to the Florida peninsula. Historically, occurred along the central and coastal ridges from Putnam County south to Broward County on the Atlantic coast and Collier County on the Gulf coast. Presently, occurs from Ocala National Forest south through Highlands County along the central ridge, and from Brevard County to northern Palm Beach County on the Atlantic ridge. One reintroduced population occurs in central Palm Beach County. Scrub lizards have presumably been extirpated from Lee and Collier counties on the Gulf coast and Broward County on the Atlantic coast (Enge et al. 1986, Enge et al. 2018).

**Range-wide Distribution:** This species is endemic to the Florida peninsula.

**Conservation Status:** Florida scrub lizards occur on numerous, but often fragmented, state, federal, and private conservation lands, most of which are along Florida's central ridges. Populations along the Atlantic coast are less secure and more fragmented. Much of the species' original scrub habitat has been destroyed for citrus groves and development (Turner et al. 2006, FNAI 2018).

**Protection and Management:** Protect all remaining scrub habitat in the state, especially along the Atlantic coast and Lake Wales Ridge. Avoid the practices of clearcutting and roller-chopping scrub habitat, which have been shown to have negative effects on scrub lizard density (Kaunert and McBrayer 2015). Thin sand pine plantations to more natural densities and return fire to the system. Use prescribed fire during the growing season every 5-7 years to maintain an open canopy with frequent sand openings in the understory (Kaunert and McBrayer 2015). Control invasive plant and animal species.

**References:** Campbell and Christman 1982, Enge et al. 1986, Enge et al. 2018, FNAI 2018., Hokit et al. 1999, Jackson and Telford 1974, Kaunert and McBrayer 2015, Krysko et al. 2019, Orton 2017, Powell et al. 2016, Turner et al. 2006, Williams and McBrayer 2015.



male © Dale R. Jackson



female © Ray E. Ashton, Jr.