
Northern Alligator Lizard

Elgaria coerulea

Reptilia — Lacertilia — Anguidae

CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide: Secure (G5)
Statewide: Imperiled (S2)
ESA: No status
USFS: Region 1: No status; Region 4: No status
BLM: Peripheral/Watch list (Type 4/Type 5)
IDFG: Protected nongame

BASIS FOR INCLUSION

Population trend data are lacking; habitat degradation.

TAXONOMY

Four subspecies of *Elgaria coerulea* are currently recognized. The northwestern alligator lizard (*Elgaria coerulea principis*) is the subspecies in Idaho.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

The northern alligator lizard occurs from central California to southern British Columbia and east to Montana. Idaho populations occur in the Panhandle region from Boundary County south to northern Clearwater County. The species is rarely encountered and poorly documented.

POPULATION TREND

Population trend is unknown.

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

This species occurs in coniferous forests, often in clearings or along forest edges. Sites typically have a prominent understory that includes grass or brush and surface debris, such as leaf litter, exfoliated bark, rotting logs, and talus.

Northern alligator lizards are invertivores, thought to consume a variety of arthropods and perhaps mollusks and earthworms.

ISSUES

Habitat suitability can be affected by surface disturbance from activities such as rock quarrying, timber harvest, and urban or agricultural development (e.g., Rutherford and Gregory 2003).

Changes to the invertebrate prey base arising from habitat alteration, pest control, or non-native species introductions could have negative consequences for alligator lizard populations. A single larva of the introduced Cinnabar moth (to control the toxic tansy

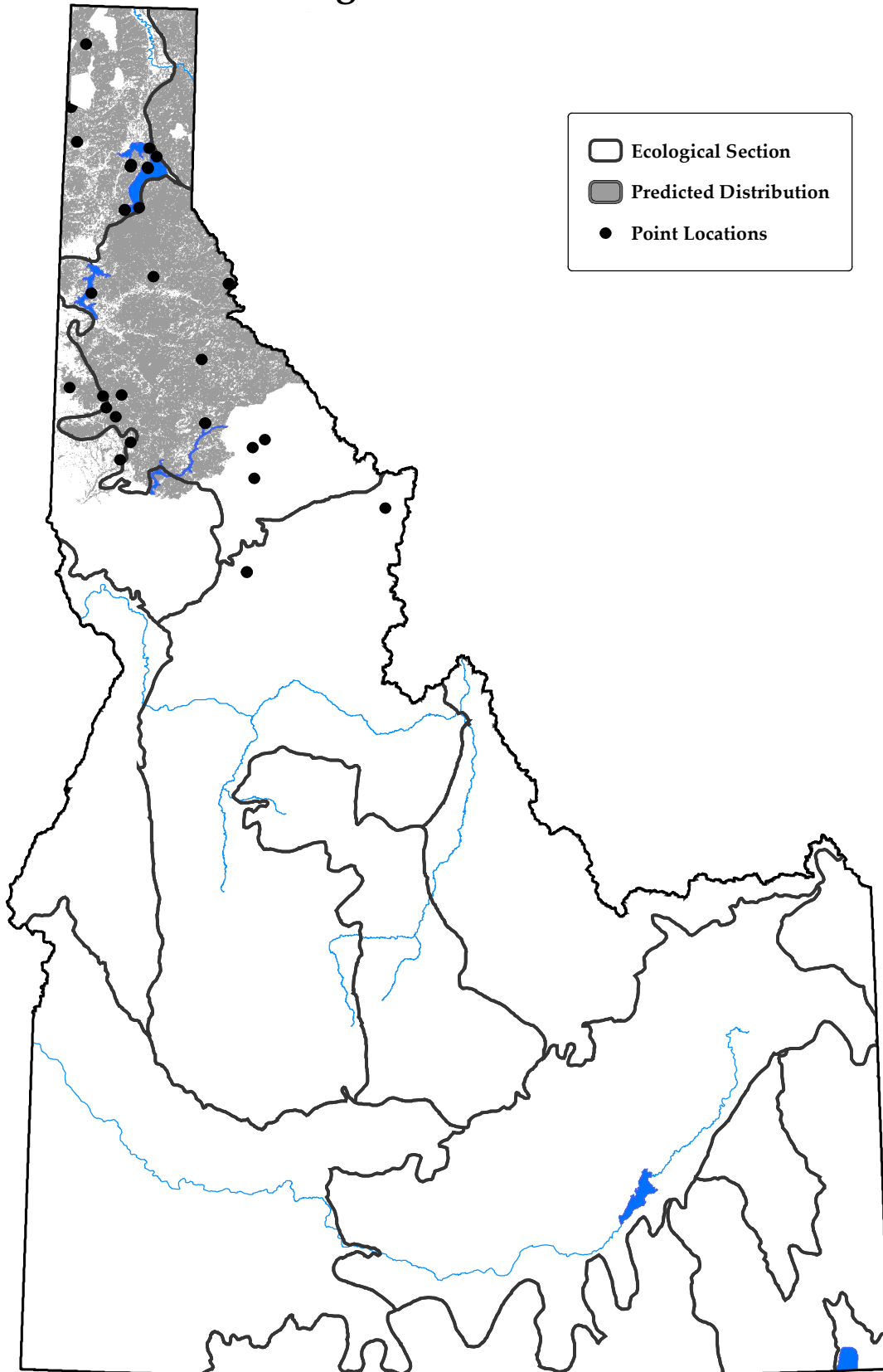
ragweed in southwest Oregon) was shown to be fatal after being eaten by an alligator lizard (Nussbaum et al 1983).

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Studies assessing distribution, abundance, and population trend are needed. Efforts to protect habitat in occupied areas are also needed. In particular, activities causing surface disturbance should be regulated so that impact to occupied habitat is avoided.

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Map created on September 19, 2005
and prepared by Idaho Conservation Data Center.
Sources: Point data are from Idaho Conservation Data Center,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (2005). Predicted distribution
is from the Wildlife Habitat Relationships Models (WHR),
A Gap Analysis of Idaho: Final Report. Idaho Cooperative Fish
and Wildlife Research Unit, Moscow, ID (Scott et al. 2002).
Predicted distribution is approximate (for more information, go to
http://www.wildlife.uidaho.edu/idgap/idgap_report.asp).

