



Summary of the proposed Recovery Strategy for the

GREATER SHORT-HORNED LIZARD IN CANADA



As part of its commitment to the protection of species at risk, the Government of Canada proclaimed the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) in 2003. A recovery strategy must be developed for each listed Extirpated, Endangered, and Threatened species to reduce known threats and to help species at risk recover.

Status

The Greater Short-horned Lizard is listed as Endangered under the *Species at Risk Act* due to ongoing threats and its small and fragmented distribution (only 8 distinct areas have confirmed occurrences in Canada).

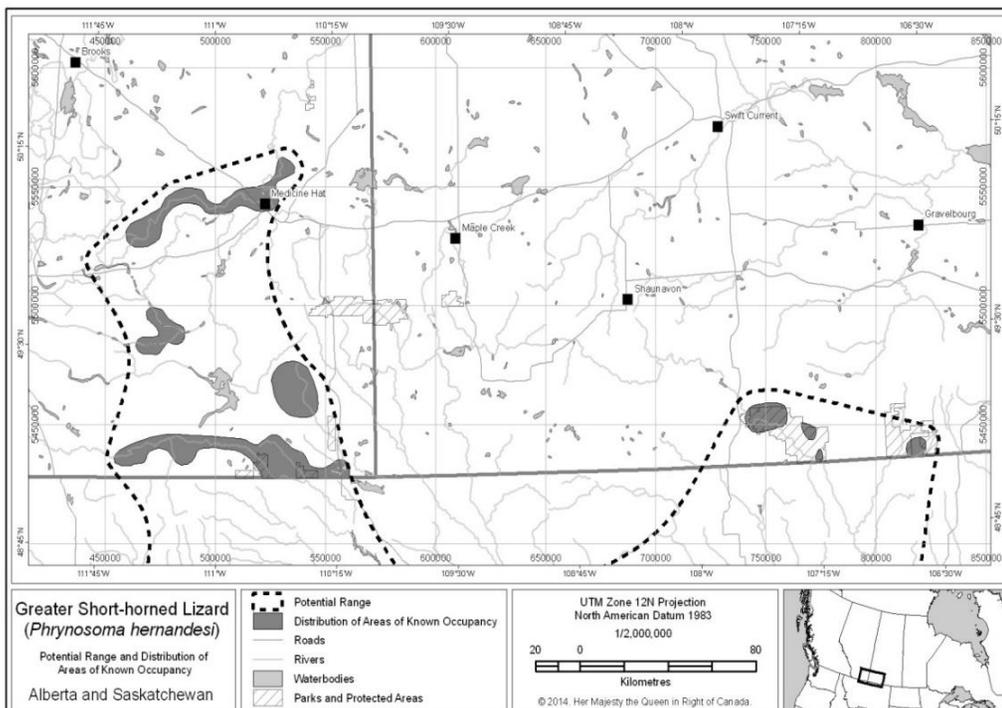


Female Greater Short-horned Lizard, photo © S. Pruss, Parks Canada Agency

Description and Distribution

The Greater Short-horned Lizard is a small, cryptic, flat and wide-bodied lizard, named after the many short horns on its head and body. It can be found in the rugged sloped areas between upland grassland and coulee bottoms throughout the Northern Great Plains as far south as central Mexico.

In Canada, the species is found in four distinct areas in southeast Alberta and four distinct areas in southwest Saskatchewan, representing less than 5% of the global range of this species.



Threats

The main threats to the Greater Short-horned Lizard include:

- the conversion of native habitat to industrial infrastructure, and
- the creation of roads in native habitat.

Other threats include:

- dams and irrigation development
- conversion of native habitat to crop and forage production
- High-intensity prolonged grazing
- invasion and establishment of exotic plants
- inclement or extreme weather conditions
- mortality from traffic and pets due to urban expansion and mortality from oil spills
- collection

The Recovery Strategy

The population and distribution objective is to maintain the current area of occupancy of the species (132 km² in Alberta and Saskatchewan combined), plus any new areas discovered in the future.

To achieve this objective, four broad strategies have been identified:

- Habitat assessment, management, conservation and protection
- Monitoring and assessment
- Research
- Communication, collaboration and engagement

What will be done?

The Recovery Strategy proposes a number of approaches to implement the broad strategies. The high priority approaches include:

- Develop beneficial management practices and stewardship agreements, focusing on habitat conservation and threat reduction.
- Assess and report on effective protection of critical habitat on provincial crown and private land.
- Conduct regular surveys of known occupied areas to determine changes in lizard occupancy.
- Survey areas of unknown occupancy where habitat appears suitable to increase knowledge of areas of occupancy.

Critical Habitat

Critical habitat is the habitat identified in a Recovery Strategy that is necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species. For a full description, please refer to the strategy.

Critical habitat is partially identified within portions of 539 quarter-sections in southeast Alberta and in southwest Saskatchewan based on the best available historical and recent data and habitat suitability.

A schedule of studies within the Recovery Strategy outlines the activities required to identify additional critical habitat that is necessary to meet the population and distribution objectives of the Greater Short-horned Lizard.

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You can also visit the following website for more information:
SARA Public Registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

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