



DUNES SAGEBRUSH LIZARD FACT SHEET

The dunes sagebrush lizard makes its home in the shinnery oaks of the rolling sand dunes of southeastern New Mexico and southwest Texas. It lives under the shade of the oak trees, burying itself in the cool white sand to avoid predators and regulate its body temperature.

The lizard is at immediate risk of extinction because of the widespread destruction of its habitat. Oil and gas development as well as ranchers' removal of shinnery oaks with an herbicide spray have rapidly destroyed and fragmented the dunes sagebrush lizard's habitat, leading to population declines. To survive, the species needs protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA has science-based listing standards, and explicitly considers socio-economic impacts at every subsequent stage of the Act's successful mechanisms to prevent extinction.

PROTECTION WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

Representative Steve Pearce (R-NM) claims that "most of the oil and gas jobs in southeast New Mexico are at risk" if the dunes sagebrush lizard is listed as endangered. However, this statement has no factual basis. Research by the Center for Biological Diversity and others shows that there will be minimal impact on oil and gas development if the lizard is protected. In a recent report, Center for Biological Diversity examined the effects of protecting the dunes sagebrush lizard habitat on oil and gas activity, specifically focusing on the leasing activity in 2010-2011 of the Bureau of Land Management Pecos District. The report found that the range of the lizard covers *less than one percent* of all oil and gas lands in the Permian Basin oil patch. Protection of lizard habitat affected less than one percent of lands that the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposed to lease to oil and gas operators in 2010-2011.

The Report also found:

- Only 5 percent (2,920 acres) of 52874 acres of the acres offered for lease since January 2010 is habitat for the dunes sagebrush lizard. Development was allowed to go forward in every instance with stipulations to protect the lizards and their habitat.
- About 15 percent (3,484 acres) of 22, 383 acres where leases are proposed in the second half of 2011 is lizard habitat.
- The BLM will defer leasing of only 560 acres – less than one percent of the lands proposed for oil and gas development during the study period – to conserve habitat for the lizard.
- There is currently a market surplus: leases offered in 2010 and 2011 outnumber those purchased by oil and gas operators.

The full report on the effect of protecting the dunes sagebrush lizard on oil and gas activity is available at: http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/reptiles/dunes_sagebrush_lizard/pdfs/Oil&Gas_DSL_Report_v1.5_final.pdf.
See also www.pearcelies.com.