

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

ENDANGERED & NONGAME SPECIES PROGRAM

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FIELD GUIDE TO REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS OF NEW JERSEY

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LIZARDS OF NEW JERSEY

Northern Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus hyacinthinus*)

Identification: 4" - 7 1/4". The fence lizard is the only spiny lizard in our area. It is a small gray or brown lizard with a high tendency to climb. In males, the sides of the belly and base of the throat are a vibrant blue. In females, this blue is paler in color and the areas of coloration are smaller. Both sexes have a dark line running along the rear surface of the thigh.

Where to find them: Fence lizards are often seen on rotting logs or stumps and fences. If they are surprised on the ground, fence lizards usually dart up a nearby tree, and climb upward for only a short distance. They will then remain motionless on the opposite side of the trunk. If they are approached again, the fence lizards dodge to the opposite side again, but higher up. Northern Fence Lizards are often heard racing away before they are seen. They are sometimes called "pine lizard" because of their frequent occurrence in open pine woods.

When to find them: June through September.

Range: All of Southern Region. In Northern Region, Monmouth County and southern Mercer and Middlesex Counties.

Ground Skink (*Scincella lateralis*)

Identification: 3" - 5 3/4". The Ground Skink is small, smooth, and golden brown to blackish brown in color. A dark dorsolateral stripe varies in color from reddish or deep brown to light golden brown. This stripe almost blends with the background color in some Ground Skinks. Their bellies are white or yellowish.

Where to find them: This lizard is typically found on the woodland floor. It will quietly take refuge when approached. When running, it makes lateral, snake-like movements. While the Ground Skink does not hesitate to enter shallow water to escape, it seldom climbs.

When to find them: Active May through September.

Range: Eastern Southern Region, west to eastern Camden, Gloucester, and Cumberland Counties; northern quarter of Cape May County. All of Burlington, Ocean, and Atlantic Counties. Most of Monmouth County in the Northern Region.

Five-lined Skink (*Eumeces fasciatus*)

Identification: 5" - 8 1/2". The coloration and pattern of the Five-lined Skink is highly variable depending on age and sex. Hatchling Five-lined Skinks have five white or yellowish stripes on a black background, and their tails are blue. As skinks grow older and larger, the lines darken and the background color lightens as the tail turns gray. Adult males usually show traces of stripes, but they tend to become nearly uniform brown or olive in coloration. During the spring breeding season, an orange-red hue appears on their jaws. Females typically retain some remnants of a striped pattern.

Where to find them: Damp habitats--cutover woods in rotting logs, under boards, or in rock piles. The Five-lined Skink does occasionally climb trees in search of insects.

When to find them: Active May through September.

Range: Entire state.

Northern Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus undulatus hyacinthinus*)



Ground Skink (*Scincella lateralis*)



Five-lined Skink (*Eumeces fasciatus*)

