

Not R2 Sensitive Species and Not of Concern

Recommendations and Evaluations

Common Name: Texas Horned Lizard

Scientific Name: *Phrynosoma cornutum*

Recommendation: Not R2 SS and not of concern

Recommendation Rationale:

This is a species of the southern Great Plains and southwest, where it is variably ranked from apparently secure (New Mexico, Texas) to imperiled (Oklahoma). Kansas and Colorado rank populations as vulnerable. Significant declines have occurred in some areas, particularly eastern Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma. The expansion of fire ants is believed to be a primary factor due to their ability to out-compete harvester ants, the lizard's primary prey; as well as broadcast use of pesticides to combat fire ants. Because fire ants aren't currently a problem in New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas, populations of Texas horned lizards remain fairly common in the western half of its range. Localized declines may occur as a result of land use conversion, over-collecting, and road mortality.

In R2, the Texas horned lizard occupies southeast Colorado and portions of central and southern Kansas, including the Comanche and Cimarron National Grasslands. Recent intensive surveys indicate the species remains widespread and common over its historic range in southeast Colorado and the Oklahoma panhandle. Hammerson (1999) believes that large-scale land use conversion is one of the biggest threats in Colorado. This is not a factor on NFS lands. Instead, grazing of those lands is compatible with horned lizard occupancy by maintaining openings and low densities of herbaceous cover. For these reasons, this species does not warrant inclusion on the Regional sensitive species list and is not of viability concern.

Note: In addition to the evaluator's references, also referred to biodiversity documentation at Natureserve.org; distribution data from the Colorado Herpetological Society; Hammerson 1999; Collins and Collins (1991) *Reptiles and Amphibians of the Cimarron National Grasslands, Morton County, Kansas*; Collins (1974) *Amphibians and Reptiles of Kansas*.