



Coachella Valley Fringe-toed Lizard (*Uma inornata*)

Size: Head and body length, 7 - 12.4 cm; tail, approx. the same **Weight:** Approx. 20 g **Habitat:** Coachella Valley area of California, from sea level to elevations of 490 meters

Surviving number: Unknown; populations declining



Photographed by Jenny E. Ross

WILDLIFE AS CANON SEES IT

Sandy is just dandy. The Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard is perfectly at ease with the fine, blowing sand and scorching heat of its California home. Its namesake fringed toes allow it to run quickly over sand without sinking, while its jaw, eyelids, ears and nostrils are all adapted to keep sand out. Active during the day, the dune dweller simply burrows into the sand for relief when the mercury rises to extremes. This is also an effective

strategy for avoiding predators. But the sand-wise lizard can't hide from habitat loss, which has been driven by development and the influx of exotic vegetation. Its precious sand is slipping away.

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