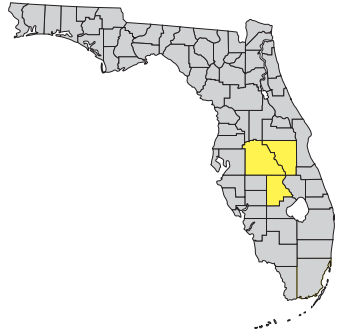


## BLUE-TAILED MOLE SKINK

*Eumeces egregius lividus*



**Order:** Squamata  
**Family:** Scincidae  
**FNAI Ranks:** G4T2/S2  
**U.S. Status:** Threatened  
**FL Status:** Threatened



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**Description:** A small, slender, brownish lizard with smooth, shiny scales; neck and head of equal width; a blue tail that may become pinkish with age; and two faint light lines on upper sides that diverge posteriorly. Legs small but fully developed, with five toes on each foot. Late-winter breeding males develop orange sides. Adults up to 5 in. (127 mm) total length; the tail comprises slightly more than half.

## **BLUE-TAILED MOLE SKINK**    *Eumeces egregius lividus*

**Similar Species:** Several other small skinks occur within or near the range of this subspecies. Older adult blue-tailed mole skinks, and those with broken or regenerated tails, are indistinguishable from the related peninsular mole skink (*Eumeces e. onocrepis*), so identification must be based on locality. The sand skink (*Neoseps reynoldsi*; see species account) is very pale, lacks stripes, and has tiny legs with only one or two toes per foot. The widespread ground skink (*Scincella lateralis*) is bronze to brown, with a dark lateral stripe and light belly. Juvenile five-lined, southeastern five-lined, and broad-headed skinks (*E. fasciatus*, *E. inexpectatus*, and *E. laticeps*) have bright blue tails, gold stripes on a black back, and more robust bodies. All salamanders lack scales.

**Habitat:** Well-drained sandy uplands above 100 ft. (30 m), usually with an abundance of scattered shrubs and lichens. Favors rosemary, oak, and sand pine scrubs; occasional in turkey oak barrens, sandhill, and xeric hammock. Requires loose sand (for burrowing) with patches of sparse to no groundcover or canopy; often found in leaf litter.

**Seasonal Occurrence:** Present but difficult to observe year-round.

**Florida Distribution:** Lake Wales Ridge in Polk, Highlands, and western Osceola counties.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Same as Florida distribution. Other subspecies of *E. egregius* range throughout the state and into southern Georgia and Alabama.

**Conservation Status:** Occurs within a series of disjunct state, federal, and private conservation lands. Most original habitat has been destroyed for citrus and development.

**Protection and Management:** Protect all remaining patches of Lake Wales Ridge scrub. Management may entail infrequent prescribed fire.

**References:** Ashton and Ashton 1991, Bartlett and Bartlett 1999, Conant and Collins 1991, Moler (ed.) 1992, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1987.