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## A Clutch of Five-lined Skink Eggs from South Florida

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squirrels were observed in the area and the remaining fledglings were more dispersed, perhaps a result of our proximity or of the earlier mobbing behavior of the jays.

Although general accounts of gray squirrel feeding habits list animal foods, including small birds and eggs, as a small dietary component (e.g. Brown and Yeager 1945, Jennings 1951, Martin et al. 1961, Nixon et al. 1968, Walker 1975), we could find no documentation of prey capture. Jennings (1951) reported an observation of a gray squirrel "in the process of eating a freshly killed Palm Warbler (*Dendroica palmarium*) which it handled as if the bird had been a large nut, turning it over repeatedly and plucking feathers off." The observer did not see how the squirrel obtained the bird. The description of the handling of the bird, however, is similar to our observation.

Animal foods in the diet of gray squirrels in late May have been reported before. Nixon (1970) observed three juvenile gray squirrels feeding on bark-dwelling insects in late May. He also found more insects in squirrel stomachs in late spring and summer and more insects in juvenile stomachs than in adults. He attributed these results to a shortage of forest seed crops, the high protein content of insects, and the abundance of recently weaned squirrels at this time of year. Although we have no population estimates of gray squirrels in Athens, it is possible that food shortage, dense populations, and the availability of easy prey account for the predatory behavior of the gray squirrel we observed.

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**A clutch of five-lined skink eggs from south Florida.**—Little has been published on the reproductive biology of *Eumeces inexpectatus*, the southeastern five-lined skink. In this note, I report on the largest clutch size and latest hatching date recorded for this species.

On the morning of 26 October 1983, a female skink was discovered with a clutch of 14 eggs under a limestone rock in sandy soil at the United States Department of Agriculture Subtropical Research Station, Miami (Dade Co.), Florida. When first uncovered the female was curled in a semicircle around her eggs, in brooding posture as has been reported for *Eumeces fasciatus* (Fitch 1954). The rock was carefully placed back over the nest and in the afternoon of the same day, I collected the skink in attendance and the eggs, two of

which had begun to hatch. The female made no attempt to defend her eggs on either occasion. The adult died within a few days, and examination of the gonads verified the sex as female. The median size (ranges) of 10 normal-appearing eggs (two were partially collapsed, see below) was 13.9 mm (12.3-14.5 mm) for length, 10.4 mm (9.1-12.4 mm) for width, and median weight was 0.7 g (0.6-1.0 g). The female measured 73 mm snout-vent length (SVL) with a tail length of 122 mm (95 mm regenerated portion). All 14 eggs hatched within 72 hours after discovery. Median hatchling size was 25.0 mm (24.0-26.0 mm) SVL, and 36.0 mm (34.0-37.0 mm) tail length.

Previous nesting dates for this species have been reported on 23 June and 28 August in Florida (Duellman and Schwartz 1958, Hamilton 1958), and the only hatching date recorded is 14 August in Mississippi (Smith and List 1955). Previous clutch sizes include the following: Alabama, 6 and 8 (Mount 1975); Florida 11 and 11 (Duellman and Schwartz 1958; Hamilton 1958); Mississippi, 11 (Smith and List 1955). Three dissected females from Kentucky averaged 11 undeveloped ova (Rundquist and Collins 1974). Egg sizes reported here are similar to those reported by Duellman and Schwartz (1958) and by Hamilton (1958). My hatchling sizes were similar to those reported by Conant (1975) and Duellman and Schwartz (1958).

Two eggs appeared partially collapsed, but all eggs hatched apparently normal young. During drought years Fitch (1954) reported collapsed eggs from *E. fasciatus* which also hatched successfully. Rainfall for September and October 1983 in Miami was below normal with only 80% of the average precipitation of 39.7 cm (N.O.A.A. 1983). Climatic variation within the nest microhabitat may have caused partial collapse of some eggs.

In summary, only scant information is available on the reproductive biology of *E. inexpectatus*. This note summarizes previous published data and includes an additional report of the largest clutch size of 14 eggs and latest hatching date of 28 October for this species. I thank George H. Dalrymple for comments on this manuscript, and Ginny Wheeler for securing many inter-library loan requests.

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