

## SIDE-BLOTCHED LIZARD

*(Uta stansburiana)*

From PRMDIA Newsletter Article Sept. 13, 2013 By Mary Wilson

The common side-blotched lizard is among the most abundant lizards in the arid western US and can be seen at the Poppy Reserve.

Their diet consists of ants, flies, mosquitoes, dragonflies, beetles, bees, aphids, caterpillars, ticks, scorpions and spiders. They are prey to larger lizards, snakes and birds. The lizard is small in size averaging 4-6 inches long from snout to tip of tail.

**Dominant male side-blotched lizards are aggressive** in defense of their territories. Upon spotting another lizard in their territory they perform “pushups”, arch their backs and extend their limbs before approaching the intruder. The males can be divided into three different categories: orange-throated, blue-throated and yellow-throated. Each of these categories varies in how it competes for mates.

### **For Adults:**

1. The orange-throated male is the “ultra dominant”. They are the largest and most aggressive and have relatively large territories and keeps a harem of females. They steal mates from the blue-throated lizards
2. Blue-throated males are “dominant”. They are medium in size and guards smaller territories. They only have one mate to defend and are better at catching the yellow-throated sneaks.
3. Yellow-throated males are “sneakers”. They do not hold any territory but have wide-reaching ranges that can overlap the other lizard’s territories. Because their coloring is similar to females, they rely on their mimicry to sneak matings with unattended females, which can be easily achieved among the harems of the orange-throated males.

### **For Children:**

Ask if they have younger brothers or sisters.

**Orange-throated:** like your oldest sister or brother, the boss of the younger ones and fierce about protecting his or her room, toys, clothes, etc.

**Blue-throated:** like the middle child, annoyed by the older sister or brother but figures out how to get along with everyone and good at catching the younger brother and sister when they are doing something wrong

**Yellow-throated:** like the youngest in the family, cute and charming but can be sneaky!