

PRAIRIE SKINK

(*Plestiodon septentrionalis*)



Status:	Not listed
Size:	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ to 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in total length, snout to vent length maximum of 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
Active season:	Early May through September
Description:	This medium-sized lizard has a long tail and small legs. It is marked with three wide tan to light brown stripes, separated by two narrow black stripes along the length of the back. The dorsal stripe fades and does not extend to the top of the head. The tail color is basically the same as the body. During mating season, the males head, neck and lips turn bright orange.
Dorsal Scales:	Smooth, shiny and large
Diet:	Crickets, grasshoppers, beetles, caterpillars, spiders and other small arthropods.
Habitat:	Often found along stream banks or openings in pine barrens, oak savannas and grasslands. They overwinter in self-constructed burrows below the frost line.
Hunting:	Active forager
Reproduction:	Egg layer, clutch size is 5-13 eggs, with an average of 9
Notes:	Prairie Skinks easily lose their tail to predators, with the detached tail continuing to wiggle, to distract the predator. The tail does re-grow, but it is not as long or colorful as the original. Juvenile Prairie Skinks are black with seven thin, yellowish stripes and a bright blue tail. Prairie Skinks are the most commonly encountered lizard in Minnesota, except for on bluffs in SE Minnesota, where the Six-lined Racerunner is more commonly encountered. The previous scientific name for this lizard was <i>Eumeces septentrionalis</i> .



MNDNR-Erica Hoeglund

Prairie Skink.



MNDNR-Christopher Smith

Male Prairie Skink with bright orange coloration shown during mating season.

Five-lined Skink and Prairie Skink juveniles look very similar. Hatchlings of both species first appear in July or August and have blue tails. Lines on their heads help distinguish between the two species.



Juvenile Five-lined Skink (*Plestiodon fasciatus*)

Two bold lines join to form a "Y" on the top of their head. This line continues in a bold stripe down their back.



Juvenile Prairie Skink (*Plestiodon septentrionalis*)

Faint lines are present on the head of juvenile Prairie Skinks.

Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 2010. [Snakes and Lizards of Minnesota](#). Nongame Wildlife Program, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, St. Paul, Minnesota. 67 pp.

