

That Obscure Object of Desire –The Search for *Phrynosoma ditmarsii*

Dale Turner first connected with wildlife by playing with Texas Horned Lizards as a kid. He grew up to become a conservation activist and wildlife biologist, including 17 years (so far) with The Nature Conservancy. His work is focused on restoration projects in the Colorado River Delta in Mexico, and leading teams to plan conservation efforts across whole watersheds such as the binational San Pedro River. Dale completed an MS in Wildlife and Fisheries Science at University of Arizona, with a thesis on ecology of the Yuman Desert Fringe-toed Lizard, *Uma rufopunctata*, in Arizona's Mohawk Dunes. He has written a wide variety of scientific and popular articles, but is happiest when out chasing lizards in the desert. Dale is a past president of the Tucson Herpetological Society.

For more than a century, the Sonoran endemic Rock Horned Lizard, *Phrynosoma ditmarsii*, has been an enigma and a lure for herpetologists. It was named from specimens collected in 1897 with a locality described as “a short distance over the border of Arizona, in old Mexico, state of Sonora.” The species was not found again until 1970, and was located after an intensive study of stomach contents from the holotype and paratype. That stirred new interest but only seven localities were known by 1984, scattered widely across the eastern half of Sonora. Another 18 years passed before the next observation.

Thanks largely to a program of biological inventories now called the Madrean Discovery Expeditions, a dozen new localities in the past decade have brought better understanding of the species' true distribution, and hints of their ecology. Dale will share what we currently know about *ditmarsii*, along with photos and stories of the search in the beautiful mountains of Sonora.

19 Sep 2018, 7:15, Ward 3 Conference Room,
1510 E Grant. Pre-meeting dinner at Rubios,
2906 N Campbell, 5:30.

