

Missouri Master Naturalist 2016 Certification Pin

Eastern Collared Lizard

Crotaphytus collaris collaris



Description

The “mountain boomer” is a gangling, big-headed, long-tailed lizard that runs on its back legs like a miniature dinosaur. The two black collar markings (often broken at the nape) are constant but coloration and pattern are variable. Males are yellowish, greenish, brownish, or bluish; throat yellow or orange-yellow; dorsal pattern consisting of a profusion of light spots and a series of dark crossbands. Females are similar but less brilliantly colored.

Size

Total length is 8–14 inches, with the head and body measuring approximately 4.5 inches.

Habitat

Collared lizards are naturally found throughout most of the Missouri Ozarks and on glades in the St. Francois Mountains. Limestone ledges, rock piles, and glades offering an abundance of hiding places are preferred habitats. They are active during the day especially during sunny, warm weather. Seasonal activity usually lasts from April to September. A great deal of time is spent basking in the sun on exposed rocks. When alarmed, they run first on all four legs, then after attaining considerable speed they run in an upright position on their back legs.

Food

Insects make up the bulk of this lizards diet. They have also been known to eat small lizards including Horned Lizards.

Interesting Facts:

- This lizard has no voice. The name “mountain boomer” probably originated in the southwestern U.S. where settlers may have seen the lizard basking on rocks, while hearing the barking call of a local frog species.
- Each lizard defends a home territory. The bright color of males is used to ward off other males. Young males use several types of avoidance behavior when traveling through a dominate males home range. They try to remain hidden, move as little as possible, and avoid displaying head-bobbing or pushups.

More Information

To identify and learn more about animals and plants near you check out the Missouri Department of Conservation field guide at mdc.mo.gov