

# Quick! How do you tell the difference between...

## ...a Five-lined Skink and a Broad-headed Skink?

At Corkscrew, that's easy. All skinks here are Southeastern Five-lined Skinks. There are NO Broad-headed Skinks - their range in Florida is the northern part of state with a few occasionals in Central Florida, but it does not extend to South Florida.

*See Florida's Fabulous Reptiles and Amphibians, p. 97, or  
Harper & Row's Complete Field Guide to North American Wildlife, p. 343*

Okay, but let's just suppose one crawled into an RV in Georgia or North Florida, the people drove to Corkscrew, they opened their RV to get their binoculars, and the Broad-headed Skink leapt out of the camper, dashed across the parking lot, and then it sneaked out onto the boardwalk where I saw it. How could I distinguish that one aberrant skink from our regular ones?

### LOOK at...

1. **Size.** The Southeastern Five-lined Skink grows to a maximum length of 8-1/2 inches. The Broad-headed Skink grows to a maximum length of 13 inches. Compare the drawings on this page - they are approximately life-size for the adult males.
2. **Shape of the head.** The Broad-headed Skink got that name because its head noticeably flares out at the head while the Southeastern Five-lined Skink only has a slight bulge. The Broad-headed is the drawing at the right; the male Five-lined at the left.
3. **Where the skink is found.** The Broad-headed prefers to be high in mature trees; the Five-lined will be at ground level or not too far from it.
4. **Where it goes when it feels threatened.** The Broad-headed usually flees up a tree; the Five-lined usually heads down toward the ground.

### Do NOT look at...

1. **Color in young.** Both young skinks have stripes and blue tails.
2. **Color in adults.** Both skinks can have wide, reddish heads. In the Five-lined Skinks, the head of the breeding male is wider and redder than that of the female.
3. **The presence of stripes.** The older Southeastern Five-lined Skink males can lose the distinct stripes on the side and become more of a uniform brown except for the reddish head during breeding season.

Five-lined Skink  
adult male  
max. size to 8.5"

Broad-headed Skink  
adult male  
max. size to 13"