

# Brigalow scaly-foot



Spinifex habitat © Craig Eddie

## Description

The Brigalow scaly-foot is a legless lizard, lead grey to greyish brown in colour. The base of the head is cream to pale brown, darkening towards the snout and contrasting sharply with the black bar on the base of the head. This lizard is quite heavy set with a round snout and moderately large limb-flaps. The scales are smooth and glossy and usually occur in 18, or occasionally 20, rows.

## Distribution

The core distribution of the Brigalow scaly-foot is within the Brigalow Belt of Queensland. It extends north to the southern Desert Uplands bioregion, south west of Charters Towers, and west to Idalia National Park in the Mulga Lands bioregion. One specimen has been recently recorded from Wyaga in New South Wales, just south of the Queensland border.

## Habitat

The Brigalow scaly-foot is found in open forests and woodlands of ironbark, poplar box, cypress pine, belah, bulloak, spotted gum, brigalow, gidgee, lancewood and hickory wattle. They have also been found in vine thickets. Topography varies from sandstone ridges to flats and gently undulating plains with clay, loam or sand.

## Ecology and Life Cycle

The Brigalow scaly-foot is nocturnal, which means it is active during the night.

It shelters beneath sandstone slabs, logs, loose bark, dense leaf litter and in grass tussocks, including spinifex. It is also known to climb small trees, using the trunk and main branches and climbing to heights in excess of two metres.

On Boyne Island, sap from hickory wattle forms a major portion of the diet of both adults and juveniles. While primarily ground-dwelling, individuals from this population have been recorded climbing the rough bark of wattles to lick exuding sap. Studies on captured female species from Boyne Island record the species laying two eggs in early November with the eggs hatching in late January.

## Scientific Name:

*Paradelma orientalis*

## Conservation Status

Vulnerable - IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (International)

Vulnerable - *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (National)

Vulnerable - *Nature Conservation Act, 1992* (Queensland)



When alarmed it rears its head and fore body and flickers its tongue, possibly to mimic a venomous snake.



Brigalow scaly-foot © S.Wilson

## Key Threats

*Inappropriate roadside management:* Roadsides and road reserves often provide suitable reptile habitat. Populations of reptiles that live within linear remnants, such as roadside strips, are particularly vulnerable to disturbances that remove essential microhabitat features, for example, rocks, logs, dense leaf litter and fallen bark. Threats can arise from inappropriate roadside burns, slashing and road widening.

*Feral animals:* The Brigalow scaly-foot is vulnerable to predation by foxes, cats and pigs.

*Inappropriate fire regimes:* Fire frequency, intensity, season, type and extent of fires over time, influence biodiversity and ecosystem processes. Inappropriate fire regimes can potentially alter ecosystem structure and impact on the species habitat requirements by, for example, removing food sources and shelter.

## Did You Know?

Despite their snake-like appearance, the legless lizards are unlikely cousins of the geckos.

## How to help

- Support pest management activities which seek to address feral animal threats e.g. foxes, cats and pigs.
- Maintain large, healthy, connected patches of native vegetation and avoid ploughing remnant strips/patches of native grassland or woodland.
- Ensure grazing practices are sustainable, maintaining at least 70% ground cover.
- If burning, use cool burns in a mosaic pattern that promote patchiness and leave areas of ground cover unburnt. If possible, leave stick-raked timber piles unburnt.
- Consider entering into a conservation agreement (e.g. Land for Wildlife, Nature Refuges or incentive agreements through grant programs) for conservation and land management assistance.
- Report sightings to WWF-Australia, the Queensland Museum or the EPA/QPWS. Taking a photo of live or dead specimens is useful to help identification.

To find out more about saving threatened species check out [www.wwf.org.au/tsn](http://www.wwf.org.au/tsn) or contact the Threatened Species Network at [tsn@wwf.org.au](mailto:tsn@wwf.org.au).



The Threatened Species Network is a community-based program of the Australian Government and WWF-Australia.



Cleared habitat © Alison Goodland