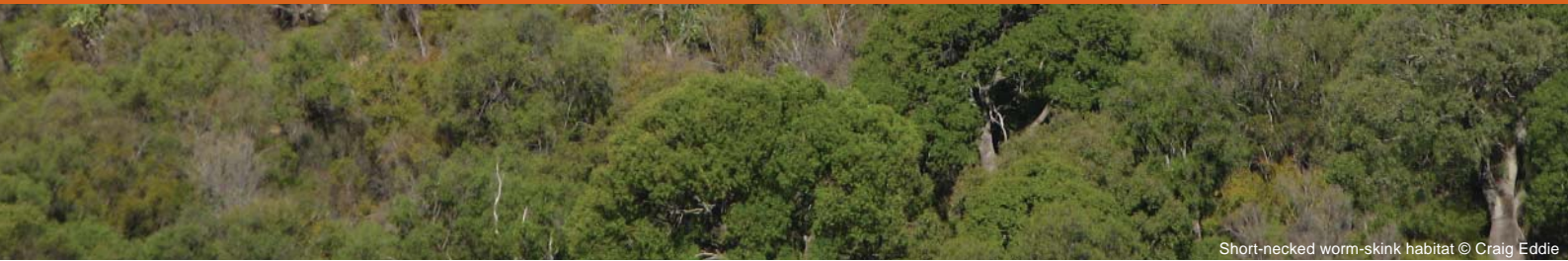


Short-necked worm-skink



Short-necked worm-skink habitat © Craig Eddie

Description

The short-necked worm-skink is a small, limbless, burrowing skink with a head and body length of around 11 to 16 centimetres. Its body is a light tan to buff colour, with darker bluish-brown colour on the head and tail. The belly is whitish or flesh coloured and the chin and throat are spotted with dark brown. A dark speckle on each scale creates a pattern of dotted lines along the length of the skink. It has a rounded snout and hidden ear-openings.



Scientific Name:

Anomalopus brevicollis

Conservation Status

Rare - *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Queensland)

Distribution

The short-necked worm-skink occurs exclusively in central-eastern Queensland. Its range is restricted to the northern half of the Mackenzie/Fitzroy/Dawson catchments, from Eungella in the north to Clermont in the west and south to Theodore.

Habitat

The short-necked worm-skink is a habitat generalist. It can be found in a variety of vegetation types including dry sclerophyll forest, monsoon rainforest and permanently moist rainforest. It has also been recorded in vine scrubs and on rock outcrops.

Ecology and Life Cycle

The short-necked worm-skink is a burrowing species, taking refuge among leaf litter, under rocks and fallen timber on well-draining soils. When disturbed it burrows deeper into soft substrates or into rock crevices. It feeds upon soil invertebrates. One or two eggs are produced per clutch.

Skinks are the most widespread and diverse lizard group in Australia. There are nearly 400 species of Australian skinks.



Short-necked worm-skink © Steve Wilson



Short-necked worm-skink habitat © Craig Eddie

Key Threats

Loss of habitat due to clearing and thinning: The focus of vegetation clearing in the Brigalow Belt is shifting from the essentially cleared Brigalow ecosystems on fertile soils to the eucalypt woodlands on poorer soils. Consequently the survival of dry woodland and open forest species with limited geographic ranges and/or specialised habitat requirements, such as the short-necked worm-skink, remain uncertain unless conservation action is undertaken.

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 i.e. by removing food sources and shelter.

How to help

- Maintain large, healthy, connected patches of native vegetation and avoid ploughing remnant strips/patches of native grassland or woodland.
- Avoid removing native vegetation particularly near creeks, water courses or rivers.
- Avoid removing essential habitat such as fallen timber, rocks and ground cover.
- If burning, use cool burns in a mosaic pattern that promote patchiness and leave areas of ground cover unburnt.
- Ensure grazing practices are sustainable, maintaining greater than 70% ground cover.
- 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.
- 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.

To find out more about saving threatened species check out www.wwf.org.au/tsn or contact the Threatened Species Network at tsn@wwf.org.au.



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



Short-necked worm-skink habitat © Craig Eddie