Queensland Brigalow Belt Reptile Recovery Program

Short-necked worm-skink © Steve Wilson

What is a reptile

Animals of the class Reptilia possess a scaly skin which is shed periodically, to facilitate growth. Reptiles differ from other terrestrial vertebrates in that they are cold blooded or 'ecothermic' this means they are unable to regulate their own body temperature so they rely on the environment for body warmth. Being cold blooded, reptiles are not found in very cold regions, and in regions with cold winters they will usually hibernate.

The future of our reptiles

The majority of Australia's reptiles are declining in numbers, in fact one in four of Australia's 850 reptile species are in significant decline. Of these Queensland has the highest number with 41 percent of species currently threatened. Unfortunately the ecology and distribution of reptiles is much less well known than that of either mammals or birds.

Those species at the greatest risk of extinction are those whose declines are driven largely by clearing of native vegetation and the consequent fragmentation of their populations.

What is the Queensland Brigalow Belt Reptile Recovery Program?

Reptiles are an important part of the natural environment. Recovery plans set out the research and management actions necessary to stop the decline of, and support the recovery of, listed threatened species or threatened ecological communities. The Queensland Brigalow Belt Reptile Recovery Plan aims to secure and improve the long term survival of the 16 species and to raise awareness of reptile conservation issues generally within the community.

The recovery program covers the Queensland part of the Brigalow Belt bioregion. This region is recognised by the Australian Government as a biodiversity hotspot.

Table 1: Current status of species considered in this recovery plan

Scientific name	Common name	EPBC 1999	NCA 1992	IUCN
Strophurus taenicauda	golden-tailed gecko		R	
Delma labialis	striped-tailed delma	V	V	V
Delma torquata	collared delma	V	V	V
Paradelma orientalis	brigalow scaly-foot	V	V	V
Anomalopus brevicollis	short-necked worm-skink		R	
Anomalopus mackayi	five-clawed worm-skink	V	E	V
Egernia rugosa	yakka skink	V	V	
Lerista allanae	retro slider	E	E	CrE
Lerista vittata	Mount Cooper striped lerista	V	V	E
Menetia sadlieri	Sadlier's skink		R	
Tympanocryptis pinguicolla	Darling Downs earless dragon	E	E	
Aspidites ramsayi	woma		R	E
Acanthophis antarcticus	common death adder		R	
Denisonia maculata	ornamental snake	V	V	V
Furina dunmalli	Dunmall's snake	V	V	V
Hemiaspis damelii	grey snake		E	

CrE = Critically endangered
E = Endangered
V = Vulnerable
R = Rare

EPBC = *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*
NCA = *Nature Conservation Act, 1992*
IUCN = World Conservation Union

Golden-tailed gecko © Craig Eddie

How will this be achieved?

The Recovery Plan outlines management actions that will need to be achieved over the next five years in order to help the survival of the species. A Recovery Team has been established to oversee, monitor and evaluate the delivery of the management actions under this plan.

Actions include activities such as identifying gaps in species research, developing and supporting research priorities, identifying and protecting key habitat and populations of the species, working with local government to protect reptile habitat on stock routes, roadsides and reserves.

By working together with many different stakeholders across the region the Recovery Team are aiming to achieve some fantastic conservation outcomes for reptiles over the next five years and beyond.

What species will it help to protect?

The recovery program focuses on 16 species of threatened reptiles from the Queensland Brigalow Belt bioregion. These include geckos, snakes, legless lizards, skinks and dragons. All of the species are recognised as threatened under state legislation, and ten of these are recognised under national legislation as threatened.

Why conserve reptiles

Generally the community perception of reptiles is not always positive. However, reptiles are often a useful 'indicator' group, meaning a decline in reptile species or numbers may mirror reductions in other animal populations. Reptiles also contribute a key service in the agricultural landscape, preying on production pests such as rats, mice and insects.

Australia has a rich and unique reptile fauna with over 90 percent of them found nowhere else in the world.

Did you know?

Australia's most dominant group of animals is the reptiles with over 850 recognised species. They have an excellent ability to cope with Australia's extreme conditions. All native reptiles are protected in Queensland and should not be disturbed or removed.

To find out how you can get involved in the recovery program or for a copy of the draft recovery plan contact the Threatened Species Network at tsn@wwf.org.au. To find out more about saving threatened species check out www.wwf.org.au/tsn.

Threatened Species Network

Australian Government

WWF

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

Queensland Murray Darling Committee

Sand-swimmer skink © Alison Goodland

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