



## Wildlife of Western Sydney *Reptiles*

Western Sydney is home to 27 species of reptile, ranging from the small burrowing Blind Snake to the large predatory Lace Monitor. These species have a fascinating array of lifestyles which adapt them to life in our local environment.

**A DISAPPEARING RESOURCE:** Sadly, land clearing and ‘beautification’ of reserves are decimating the reptiles of the region. Most vulnerable are the habitat specialists – such as the Tiger Snake – and species with very large territories such as the Lace Monitor. Without change, these species may disappear before future generations can enjoy them. This makes it all the more important to get out and see your local fauna.

**TIPS FOR REPTILE WATCHING:** Most local reptiles are out during the day, offering excellent opportunities for observation. Sunny areas beside shrubbery – such as the edge of walking trails – are ideal spots to look.

Some of the smaller reptiles are nocturnal, including the Wood Gecko, Red-naped Snake and Bandy-Bandy. These are uncommon species, and you should not expect to see them unless you spotlight regularly in good quality remnants. The Three-toed skink, Blind Snake and Bandy-Bandy are burrowing species, and are rarely seen.

Snakes pose no danger unless you interfere with them, whether deliberately or accidentally. To avoid this, make sure you stick to formed trails, keep an eye on your feet, and wear tall boots or gaiters. Always give snakes a wide berth and a ready route for them to escape to safety. All species of snake should be considered dangerous if interfered with, and the same rules apply for other reptiles, which can bite or scratch if threatened.

Reptile collection by hobbyists, while rare, continues to be a problem in the region. Reptile collecting is strictly illegal, and if unregistered reptiles are found in your possession severe fines can and are imposed. Wild-caught reptiles may also harbour disease, so make sure any pet reptiles are purchased from a licensed dealer.

**ORGANISED ACTIVITIES:** The Frog & Tadpole Society (‘FATS’) often run outings in Western Sydney. See the website [www.fats.org.au](http://www.fats.org.au) for details. Greening Australia run the Frogs, Furies & Flapjacks Twilight Walk at Mamre Homestead, South Creek. Bookings can be made via the Homestead on (02) 9670 6178.

**HABITAT - SOIL & FIRE:** The Cumberland Plain’s vegetation is driven by soils, and understanding soils can help in understanding the area’s fauna. The flat clay areas support open grassy woodland of Grey Box or Spotted Gum called *Cumberland Plain Woodland*. Around Castlereagh this is covered by ancient river deposits of lower nutrient sands, silt and pebbles. This supports a shrubby forest of *Castlereagh Ironbark Woodland* on the flats, and *Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland* on rises. Near Agnes Banks, this is further covered by wind-blown sand

deposits supporting *Agnes Banks Woodland*, a shrubby community of *Angophora* and Scribbly Gum. Beside the Hawkesbury-Nepean and alongside major creeks, recent river sediments support *Alluvial Woodland* dominated by Forest Red Gum or the endangered Camden White Gum.

The fertile Cumberland Plain Woodlands and grasslands are the best habitat for many open-woodland specialists. However, these communities have suffered the most from clearing, and many of the woodland fauna are now found only in the large remnants of the less fertile, shrubbier Castlereagh and Agnes Banks Woodlands. Originally, grasslands and grassy glades were a key part of all these communities, but clearing and the suppression of fire has made grasslands the rarest habitat type in the region. A number of species rely on grasslands, so those that remain are well worth a visit.

The vegetation preferences of each species are noted in the text (where known). These can be correlated with the habitat colour coding on the map to give a better idea of the species distributions.

**CONSERVATION STATUS:** The legal status (if any) under NSW law is listed for each species.

**REPORTING RARE WILDLIFE:** If you think you have seen any of the species indicated in **RED** you should report your findings. Knowing where these species are helps community and government protect them. If possible, take a photo and record the nearest street address.

You can report your sightings to the Western Sydney Wildlife Record [westernsydneywildlife@hotmail.com](mailto:westernsydneywildlife@hotmail.com)  
Injured wildlife should be reported to WIRES on 1300 094 737

**ABBREVIATIONS:**

[...] denotes future Park or Reserve (not yet open to public)

Protected Lands	Other Public Lands
NR Nature Reserve	RP Regional Park
NP National Park	RES Council Reserve

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Photographs donated by: Alan Kwok: **AK** / Bidgee: **BJ** / Dean Lewis (<http://dl.id.au>): **DL** / ‘Eyeweed’: **EW** / George Cruiser: **GC** / Gordan Smith: **GS** / Greg Miles: **GM** / ‘Greg the Busker’: **GB** / Gus McNab: **GMc** / Jean-Marc Hero: **JMH** / Jonathan Ayres: **JA** / Ken Stepnell/OEH: **KS** / ‘LiquidGhoul’: **LG** / Lindy Lumsden: **LL** / Michael Jarman/OEH: **MJ** / Narawan Williams: **NW** / NSW Office of Environment & Heritage: **OEH** / Peter Ridgeway: **PR** / Peter Street: **PS** / Rosie Nicolai/OEH: **RN** / Retama: **RT** / Ray Williams: **RW**

**Cover photo:** Diamond Python *Morelia spilota*, © Peter Ridgeway  
**Text:** Peter Ridgeway

*The Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority (HNCMA) was formed to help protect the natural values of the Hawkesbury-Nepean and ensure it continues to be a healthy and productive catchment. This brochure is one of a series of brochures on the fauna in western Sydney to raise awareness, promote landcare / bushcare, and protect biodiversity.*  
[www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au)

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**Cream Striped Shinning Skink**  
*Cryptoblepharus virgatus*  
Common & widespread



**Robust Ctenotus**  
*Ctenotus robustus*  
A large species of skink, common in Cumberland Plain Woodland; occasionally Castlereagh  
Sites to visit: Scheyville NR; Kemps CK NR



**Copper-tailed Ctenotus**  
*Ctenotus taeniolatus*  
Common on sandstone edges of CP and Castlereagh, occasionally Cumberland Plain Woodland  
Sites to visit: Razorback, Cranebrook NR



**White's Skink**  
*Egernia whitii*  
Uncommon but widespread  
Sites to visit: Mulgoa NR, Castlereagh NR



**Eastern Water-Skink**  
*Eulamprus quoyii*  
Common beside water throughout region



**Bar-sided Skink**  
*Eulamprus tenuis*  
Common in *Casuarina* forests (often called 'She-oak skink') and other habitats throughout region



**Dark-flecked Garden Skink**  
*Lampropholis delicata*  
Common & widespread



**Pale-flecked Garden Skink**  
*Lampropholis guichenoti*  
Common & widespread



**Tree-base Litter-Skink**  
*Lygisaurus foliorum*  
Uncommon; e.g. Castlereagh NR



**Weasel Skink**  
*Saproscincus mustelinus*  
Uncommon but can survive in smaller remnants



**Bearded Dragon**  
*Pogona barbata*  
Common in larger remnants



**Eastern Water Dragon**  
*Physignathus lesueurii*  
Common in larger remnants



**Jacky Lizard**  
*Amphibolurus muricatus*  
Common in larger remnants



**Lace Monitor**  
*Varanus varius*  
Wide-ranging species now uncommon and in decline due to habitat loss and connectivity

### Want to help protect Western Sydney's fauna?

Join your local landcare or bushcare group. For information, contact the Regional Landcare Facilitator at the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority, Penrith.

**P:** 02 4725 3050

**W:** <http://www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au/landcaregroup/>

or speak to your local Council or National Parks and Wildlife Service office.

Have you seen these animals? Please report sightings of **RED** species to [westernsydneywildlife@hotmail.com](mailto:westernsydneywildlife@hotmail.com) to help us protect our wildlife.



**Three-toed Skink**  
*Saiphos equalis*  
Uncommon but can survive in smaller remnants; burrows in leaf litter and under embedded woody materials in moist soils



**Eastern Blue-tongue**  
*Tiliqua scincoides*  
Wide-ranging common species of urban fringe



**Wood Gecko**  
*Diplodactylus vittatus*  
An uncommon species of larger, intact remnants



**Long-necked Tortoise**  
*Chelodina longicollis*  
Permanent waterholes; in Summer males range widely over dry land seeking new habitat, leading to frequent road-kill



**Nepean Short-necked Tortoise**  
*Emydura macquarii dharuk*  
Hawkesbury-Nepean River and large wetlands. Pure form restricted to upper Nepean and Colo rivers; elsewhere interbred with exotic stock from pet trade.



**Tiger Snake**  
*Notechis scutatus*  
Swamps. Once common, now restricted to a single population in future Edmonson Regional Park. Threatened by loss, disturbance and 'beautification' of habitat.



**Red-bellied Black Snake**  
*Pseudechis porphyriacus*  
Common, especially riverside and swamp habitats



**Eastern Brown Snake**  
*Pseudonaja textilis*  
Common in larger remnants



**Whip Snake**  
*Demansia psammophis*  
Generally a sandstone species, but also found in Windsor Downs and Castlereagh region



**Red-naped Snake**  
*Furina diademata*  
Reasonably common and widespread but rarely observed – generally nocturnal



**Bandy-Bandy**  
*Vermicella annulata*  
Last confirmed 1991 in Windsor Downs NR; this striking nocturnal species burrows in the leaf litter, where it preys on Blind Snakes



**Blind Snake**  
*Ramphotyphlops nigrescens*  
A rarely seen inhabitant of good quality remnants, where it burrows in leaf litter; less common in Reserves (most of which are regrowth), most records are from smaller remnants approved for clearing e.g. Riverstone, Middleton Grange.



**Diamond Python**  
*Morelia spilota*  
An inhabitant of mature vegetation with tree hollows – e.g. Byrnes Creek (St Clair). Now rare across region.



**Scaly-foot**  
*Pygopus lepidopodus*  
Uncommon species generally restricted to Castlereagh soils; in decline



**Burtons Legless Lizard**  
*Lialis burtonis*  
An uncommon species, typically a sandstone specialist but formerly also found in Castlereagh area; possibly extinct in region

### Legless Lizards