

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 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
Injured wildlife should be reported to WIRES on 1300 094 737

ABBREVIATIONS:

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

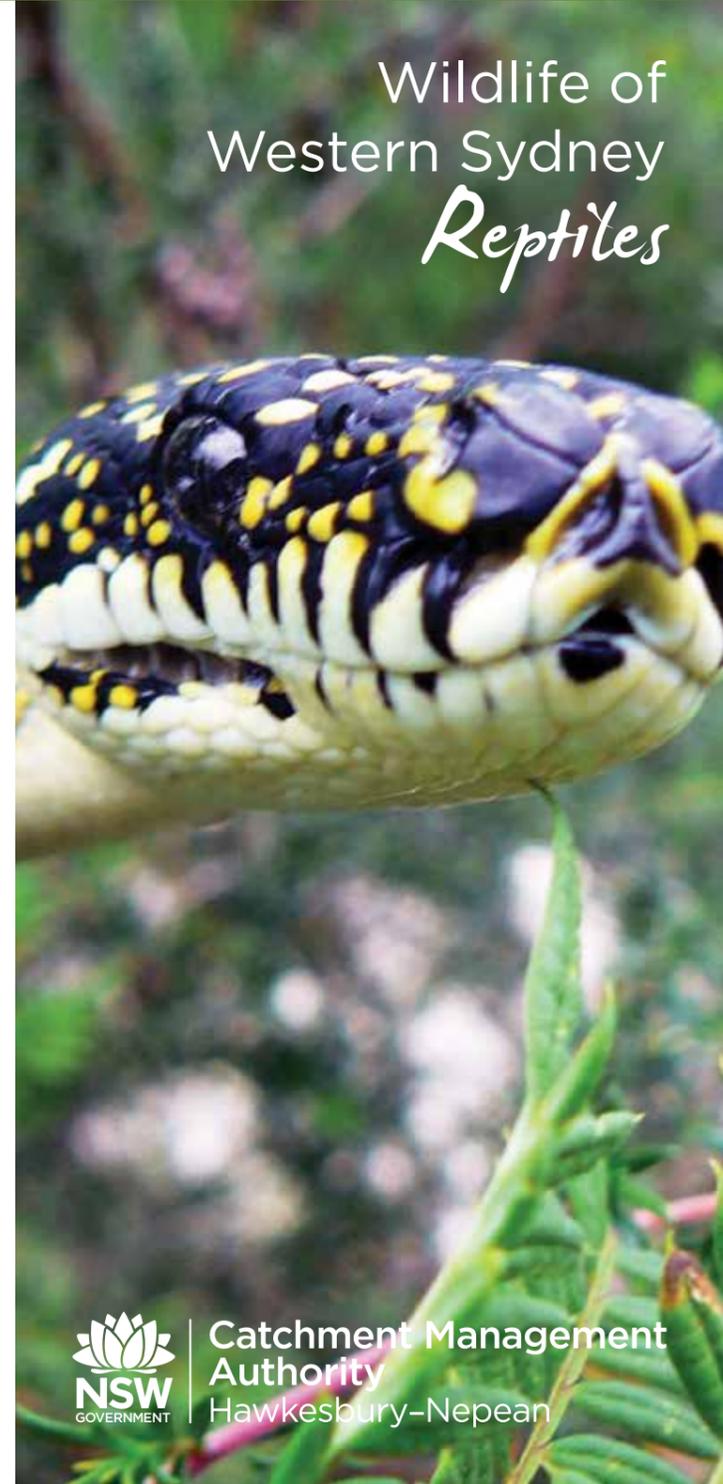
Protected Lands	Other Public Lands
NR Nature Reserve	RP Regional Park
NP National Park	RES Council Reserve

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

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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 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