

Look out FOR Lizards in Taranaki



Native And Special

- New Zealand has over 125 different species of native lizard.
- At least 11 of these species (5 gecko and 6 skink) live in Taranaki
- All native NZ lizards (except for one skink species) give birth to live young and are slow to reproduce
- They have a long life – native geckos have been found in the wild over 50 years old
- Having evolved without mammalian predators they are easy prey for cats, rats and mice
- NZ lizards eat insects, fruit and nectar
- Lizards are important for our native ecosystems as:
 - tiny predators (eating insects and bugs)
 - prey (food for native birds)
 - pollinators and seed dispersers of many native plants



Skinks and Geckos – whats the difference?



Things to look out for:

Skinks

- Slender and shiny like a snake with legs
- No obvious neck
- Eyes that blink
- Narrow toes

Geckos

- Loose baggy skin like suede
- Have a 'neck'
- Large round eyes that don't blink
 - they lick their eyes to clean them
- Often have wide toe pads



In Trouble

Over 90% of New Zealand's native lizards are Threatened or At Risk.

Many are now restricted to offshore islands or areas with intensive predator control.

AT RISK



Lizards are at risk from:

- **Predators**
Cats, rats, mice, hedgehogs and mustelids (stoats, ferrets, weasels)
- **Habitat destruction**
Subdivision, construction, landscaping, vegetation clearance
- **Illegal collection and smuggling**
- **Competition and displacement**
from introduced lizards (plague skink)

All Native lizards are protected under the WILDLIFE ACT 1953. This means they cannot be collected or kept without a permit. It is also an offence to kill them or destroy their habitat. Please consider our native lizards when removing vegetation or doing earthworks.

! Plague Skink (Australian Invader)

Plague skinks or rainbow skinks came from Australia and are spreading through NZ. They have only recently been confirmed in Taranaki.



- Plague skinks are agile and fast.
- They lay eggs and are able to reproduce quicker than our native species.
- They can build up large numbers quickly and take up all the best basking and feeding sites displacing our native species.
- Plague skinks are curious and inquisitive and often hitch rides by climbing into luggage, cars, plants etc.
- Their eggs are easily transported in potting mix and garden materials.



Lampropholis delicata

Further information: www.doc.govt.nz/

Lizard Habitats



COASTAL



WETLAND
SHRUBLAND



FOREST



GRASSLAND



URBAN

Native lizards live in a variety of habitats from down near the beach to up on the mountain.

Lizards need to be safe from predators in undisturbed places like:

- Grassy weedy areas
- Shady moist areas - leaf litter
- Rotting logs or old piles of timber or stones
- Stacks of bricks or pavers
- Crevices in walls and sheds
- Trees
- Clay banks
- Established foliage bushes
- Flowering native trees

What You Can Do



Make your garden lizard friendly. Plant:

- Low growing and clump forming plants like toe toe, astelia and flax
- Dense climbers (but not weeds)
- Divaricating (many branched) native plants
- Nectar producing plants like manuka, flax, pohutukawa, lacebark, pittosporums, rata



Create spaces for lizards to live:

- Rock piles
- Logs and debris in garden
- Leave areas of deep leaf litter and mulch



Reduce use of chemicals and sprays

Lizards eat insects and drink nectar!



Control predators

Especially rats, mice and stoats



Be responsible pet owners

Cats are very good lizard predators and can easily wipe out local lizard populations.



Report lizard sightings to DOC

International REPTILE AWARENESS DAY 21 October



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www.doc.govt.nz

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Taranaki's Local Lizards

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[IMAGES NOT TO SCALE]



Barking gecko

Naultinus punctatus

AT RISK



Forest gecko

Mokopirirakau granulatus

AT RISK



Kupe skink

Oligosoma aff. infrapunctatum

THREATENED



Brown skink

Oligosoma zelandicum

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Northern grass skink

Oligosoma polychroma



Ornate skink

Oligosoma ornatum

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Goldstripe gecko

Woodworthia chrysosiretica
(Moko mangaeka)

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Pacific gecko

Dactylocnemis pacificus

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Elegant gecko

Naultinus elegans

AT RISK



Striped skink

Oligosoma striatum

AT RISK



Copper skink

Oligosoma aeneum

AT RISK

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