

Common Name: Blue-tongue skink

Scientific Name: *Tiliqua scincoides*



IUCN Red list Status: not listed
AZA Conservation Program: none

Class: Reptilia
Order: Squamata
Family: Scincidae
Genus: Tiliqua

Habitat: Open woodlands, semi-desert, tropical or agricultural areas in south and east Australia. This species is able to adapt well to different temperatures.

Threats in the Wild: Major predators of blue-tongues are large predatory birds and large snakes. Larger mammals such as Tasmanian Devils and Dingos are also known to eat blue-tongues.

Physical Characteristics: Blue tongue skinks have a stout body with relatively small limbs and a thick, short tail. They have a broad, blunt triangular head. The tail is shorter than the body and generally tapers evenly to a point. Their legs are small and weak with small calves. Although this might indicate they are slow and easy to catch, they are surprisingly swift and able to move their bodies over the ground and into cover with great agility. Their body length is usually between 16 and 20 inches. The Blue tongue's color varies from silvery-gray to black. They have overlapping scales that are usually smooth and contain small plates of bone. Like other lizards, the roof of the mouth contains a Jacobson's organ. The tongue picks up odorous particles from the air or surface of objects and brings it to the organ for identification. The colorful blue tongue is used in a dramatic fashion to startle, distract, and ward off predators. When startled, a blue-tongue skink will usually stand its ground, hissing loudly, puffing up its body, and opening its mouth to show the blue tongue. If the threat does not go away, the skink may hiss and flatten out its body, making it look bigger.

Reproduction: Breeding season occurs once a year. Males seek out females and trail them. The male will bite and hold the female prior to and during mating. Females give birth 3 - 5 months later. Blue-tongue skinks are ovoviviparous; they carry shell-less membrane-enclosed "egg" sacs internally, which rupture and "hatch" as the sacs are expelled from the mother's body. Even though the young skinks are born live, as developing embryos they derive their sustenance from the yolks of their sacs. Females give birth to 6 - 15 young in a litter. Newly hatched young average 4-5 inches in length and weigh about ½ ounce. They grow very quickly and reach adult size in less than one year.



Fact Sheet - Reptilia- Blue-tongue skink
Last Updated: April 2020



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Longevity: 15 – 20 years.

Diet: Blue-tongue skinks are omnivores. They feed on a variety of insects, mice, snails, carrion, worms, and other lizards. They also eat wildflowers, berries and native fruits.

Miscellaneous: There are 7 different species of the blue tongue skink found in Australia, Tasmania, and New Guinea. Blue-tongue skinks are terrestrial. They spend most of their time on the ground, however, they are capable of climbing. In the wild blue-tongues live out in the open in the summer but in the winter they dig holes underground. They usually live in open country with lots of ground cover. At night they shelter among leaf litter or under large objects on the ground such as rocks and logs. In the morning they emerge to bask in sunny areas before foraging for food during the warmer parts of the day. If a predator grabs a blue-tongue by the tail, it will shed its tail. The lost portion of the tail will eventually grow back.

Resident Animal Specifics: Oliver was born in 2010.



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