
Northern Blue-tongued Skink

Tiliqua scincoides

Class: *Reptilia*

Order: *Quamata*

Family: *Scincidae*

Characteristics:

Largest of lizards at 17-24 in. Wt. 10-18 oz. Long body, large head, small legs with delicate toes. Tail shorter than body, tapering to a point. Colored with dark and orange bars on light brown background. Faint eye stripes and cobalt-blue tongue. Skin consists of overlapping scales containing small plates of bone. Eardrums are sunken into cavities on sides on head. Skin is shed in pieces. Not sexually dimorphic.

Behavior:

Diurnal. Spends day searching for food and basking in sun maintaining a temperature of 30-35 C. Shelters at night in hollow logs, rocks or debris. Stays buried in shelter in cold weather. Ingests small stones to help digest food. When threatened may stand its ground, puff up, hiss, and stick out its blue tongue to startle a predator. Has powerful, painful bite even without well defined teeth. Can make a hasty retreat but if grabbed by rear will shed tail which will eventually grow back.

Reproduction:

Mating takes place in spring. Female is ovoviviparous carrying eggs which hatch in the body; 5-20 hatchlings are delivered live after 4 months gestation. Young are precocial and disperse within a few days. Newly hatched average 4 in long and weigh about .5 oz. If they can find enough to eat, they grow quickly reaching adult size in less than a year.

Diet:

Wild: animal and plant materials including insects, snails, flowers, fruits and berries.

Zoo: greens, veggies, dog food, vitamins

Conservation:

Not endangered. Predators include Tasmanian devil, native cat, dingoes, kookaburras, other carnivores. Welcomed in gardens for keeping down snails and plant eating insects. Often fall prey to suburban cats, dogs, garden chemicals and lawn mowers

FYI:

Not recommended as pets as they require very specialized diets and environment. Thought to mimic poisonous Death Adder as both share similar coloration and the short legs gives the impression of a snake.



Range & Habitat: Australia in semi-desert, mixed woodlands and scrub lands.



Lifespan: 15-20 years in captivity, unknown in the wild.

Special Adaptations:

Sheds tail to escape predators.
Movable, transparent lower eyelid to protect from dust.

IUCN Conservation Status:

Not Evaluated

