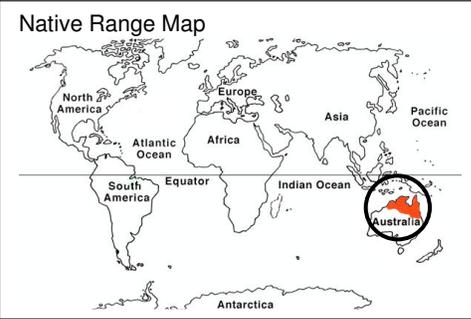


Native Range Map



Northern Blue-tongued Skink

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Subphylum: Vertebrata
Class: Reptilia
Order: Squamata
Family: Scincidae
Genus: *Tiliqua*
Species: *scincoides intermedia*

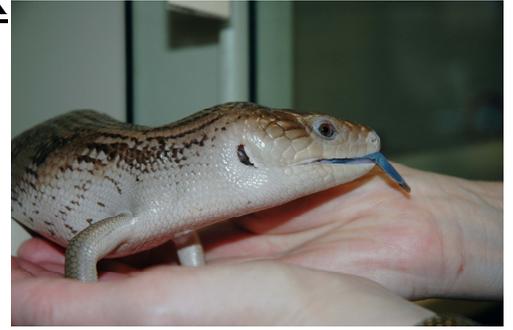


Photo courtesy of Karen Marzynski

Habitat

- **In the Wild:** This species of skink is found inhabiting the forests, woodlands, and grasslands of Northern Australia.
- **Exhibit Location:** Zoo to You Collection

Characteristics

- The northern blue-tongued skink is the largest of the world's skinks, with a long body reaching 17-24 inches in length.
- This skink has a large head and small legs with delicate toes. The tail is shorter than the body and tapers to a point. Eardrums are sunken into cavities on the sides of the head. Its teeth are large and they have strong jaw muscles to crush snails and beetles.
- Its color consists of a pattern of dark brown bars on a light brown or cream background. It has a faint eye stripe and a cobalt-blue tongue. Scales are shiny, overlapping, and contain small plates of bone. Its skin is shed in pieces.
- There are little external differences between sexes. Males are more heavily bodied, especially around the head and neck, with the skin being more boldly patterned.
- This skink can shed its tail to escape predators and then regrow it. It has a movable and transparent lower eyelid to protect the eyes from dust while still allowing it to see.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** 12-20 years; **In Captivity** 18-20 years

Behaviors

- Blue-tongued skinks are diurnal (active during the day) and live on the ground. They seek shelter at night in hollow logs and under ground debris. They bask in the morning to raise their body temperature.
- They are shy and secretive and seldom stray far from their shelter. They are not very agile and the animals they eat are mostly slow moving.
- Some swim well, and will occasionally enter shallow water to drink and soak.
- If frightened, they can and will bite. They can put up a bold front when cornered or threatened. They puff up the body, stick out the long, blue tongue, and hiss.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** lots of moist moss, rearranging exhibit furniture, daily handling

Reproduction

- Breeding occurs once yearly. Males seek out females and trail them. The male will aggressively bite and hold the female prior to and during mating. Damage to scales and injuries are common during this time.
- Gestation is 100 days. The young develop in membranes inside the female and are born alive. Up to 15 are born in a litter. They are sustained by the yolk that is absorbed into the abdominal cavity prior to birth.
- Newborns are about 4 inches long and weigh about 0.5 ounces. They are smaller versions of the adults. After several days to a week after birth, they begin to feed on slow moving insects and lick fruits when available.

Diet

- **In the Wild:** insects, snails, fruits, berries, wildflowers, carrion
- **At the Zoo:** fruit, greens, cockroaches, crickets, superworms, mealworms, insectivore diet

Conservation Status

- **IUCN status:** not listed; **CITES:** not listed
- Predators include Tasmanian devils, native cats, dingoes, and kookaburras. They may also fall prey to domestic cats and dogs, garden chemicals, and lawn mowers.

Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- These are very alert lizards, but not at all fast in their escape attempts. When they move, they use a serpentine (snake-like) movement.
- They ingest small stones to help digest their food.
- There are over 600 species of skinks, with the northern blue-tongued being the largest.

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