



REPTILE

Varanus rosenbergi

Heath Goanna

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	V	E	-	Resident



Photo: © Hafiz Stewart

Conservation Significance

The AMLR distribution is disjunct, isolated from other extant occurrences within SA. Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Extremely Restricted'. Relative to all AMLR extant species, the species' taxonomic uniqueness is classified as 'High'.³

Description

Blackish above, finely dotted with yellow or white, with about fifteen narrow, black bands on the neck and body, those on the neck curving forward. Pale-edged black temporal stripe. Tail alternatively banded with blackish-brown and pale yellow, either extending to the end of the tail, or the latter uniformly dark. Whitish below, reticulated with black or grey. Grows to about 1m (total length). Similar in most respects to Gould's Goanna (or Monitor) (*Varanus gouldii*), differing mainly in colour pattern.² The Heath Goanna is most easily distinguished from the Gould's Goanna by the absence of a pale coloured tail tip, present in the latter (K. Long *pers. comm.* 2009).

Distribution and Population

Distributed in a thin band between the south-west of WA and the south-east of SA. Isolated populations occur in VIC and NSW (Cogger 2000).⁴

Natural range in SA is the higher rainfall agricultural areas in southern parts. Still common on Kangaroo Island, but in the SMLR, as throughout its mainland distribution, the population has been reduced.¹

Rarely seen in the Adelaide region. Numbers have declined significantly since the 1960s. Preference for heathy habitats means it is also found in Coorong and Ngarkat CPs, where numbers are also declining.⁴

The rarity of this relatively large and therefore easily observed species within the AMLR region is supported by the paucity of recent sightings.¹

A road-kill was recorded in 2007 on the south side of Belair NP. The species had not been recorded in that area since the 1950's (H. Stewart *pers. comm.*).

Pre-1983 filtered records indicate that within the AMLR three single records, from Myponga area, Belair and Heathfield.³

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records are scattered (often single) from Currency Creek, east of Mount Compass, Mount Billy CP, Cox Scrub CP, Mount Bold, Belair, South Para Reservoir and Hale CP.³ It may also occur at Newland Head CP (M. Hutchinson *pers. comm.*).

A recent call for community sightings of the Heath Goanna generated 50 records for the period 2004-2009 (K. Long *pers. comm.* 2009). These observations confirm core populations occur in the Mount Compass area. The species distribution in the AMLR was also extended with several records from the Deep Creek area of the southern Fleurieu (K. Long *pers. comm.* 2009).

Habitat

Habitat across southern Australia includes coastal heaths, humid woodlands, and wet and dry sclerophyll forests (Cogger 2000).²

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation group is Heathy Woodland.³

Biology and Ecology

Shelters in burrows, hollow logs and rock crevices.² Eggs are laid in active termite mounds in mid-late summer. Eggs hatch after eight months and young remain in the mound for several weeks after slowly excavating an escape tunnel. They do not emerge until warm weather arrives. Juveniles will continue to utilise the mound as shelter for several months (King and Green, 1999).

Further information:

Biodiversity Conservation Unit, Adelaide Region
Phone: (61 8) 8336 0901 Fax: (61 8) 8336 0999
<http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/>

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Prepared as part of the Regional Recovery Plan for Threatened Species and Ecological Communities of Adelaide and the Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia 2009 - 2014





ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY RANGES SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Threatened Species Profile

Department
for Environment
and Heritage

Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the AMLR distribution occurs in Ngarrindjeri, Kurna and Peramangk Nations.³

Threats

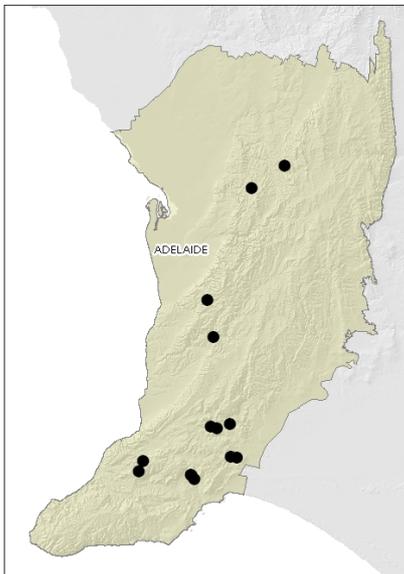
It is difficult to assess risks to this species because it is so uncommon (M. Hutchinson *pers. comm.*).

Threats may include:

- lack of recruitment
- illegal hunting and collection
- predation by dogs, cats, foxes and native predators (e.g. Eastern Brown Snake and raptors), especially on juveniles
- habitat disturbance
- poisoning/toxic pesticides
- wildfires and fire management activities (M. Hutchinson *pers. comm.*)
- physical removal of woody debris that reduces the available termite nesting possibilities (D. Armstrong *pers. comm.*)
- road mortality
- habitat loss and fragmentation

Additional current direct threats have been identified and rated for this species. Refer to the main plan accompanying these profiles.

Regional Distribution



Map based on filtered post-1983 records.³ Note, this map does not necessarily represent the actual species' distribution within the AMLR.

References

Note: In some cases original reference sources are not included in this list, however they can be obtained from the reference from which the information has been sourced (the reference cited in superscript).

- 1 Armstrong, D. M., Croft, S. N. and Foulkes, J. N. (2003). *A Biological Survey of the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges, South Australia, 2000-2001*. Department for Environment and Heritage, South Australia.
- 2 Cogger, H. G. (2000). *Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia (Sixth Edition)*. Reed New Holland.
- 3 Department for Environment and Heritage (2007). *Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Regional Recovery Pilot Project Database*. Unpublished data extracted and edited from BDBSA, SA Herbarium (July 2007) and other sources.
- 4 Turner, M. S. (2001). *Conserving Adelaide's Biodiversity: Resources*. Urban Forest Biodiversity Program, Adelaide.

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