



## Fowlers Gap Biodiversity Checklist

### Reptiles

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Modern reptiles are at the most diverse in the tropics and the drylands of the world. The Australian arid zone has some of the most diverse reptile communities found anywhere. In and around a single tussock of spinifex in the western deserts you could find 18 species of lizards. Fowlers Gap does not have any spinifex but even so you do not have to go far to see reptiles in the warmer weather. The diversity here is at

to eat. But reptiles have a few more tricks to adapt them to the arid zone. Firstly they are not dependent on free drinking water. They acquire most of their water from their diet and can lick some dew off the vegetation if necessary. Secondly, they do not have a high metabolism like birds and mammals and so can feed sporadically rather than needing to find a large meal every day.

is at this time since they make a good-sized meal for their chicks. So take care, courtship is a difficult enough business without having to dodge the traffic. Around the Station you are likely to encounter one of the several **Striped Skinks**. On the stony rises you may find the **Eastern Wedgesnout Ctenotus** or **Spotted Ctenotus** clambering about. Out in the open ground it is likely to be **Pale-rumped Ctenotus**. Amongst the shrubs and spinifex look out for **Barred Wedgesnout Ctenotus** or **Leonhardi's Ctenotus**. At night you are most likely to encounter the adaptable

way to the arboreal **Carnaby's Wall Skink** that also likes the climbing surfaces of buildings.

o what about all these ultra-venomous snakes that supposedly lurk in the bushes waiting to strike out at an unwary visitor? Well you will probably be lucky to see a snake as they are not abundant (as a 'top' predator), they are secretive and they tend to be more active at night as the days warm up into summer. However, be careful around areas where there is obviously lots of potential prey, such as dense vegetation near earthen tanks (frogs and birds), burrows and deeply cracked soils (reptiles and mammals), fallen timber (reptiles) and some of the debris of pastoral activities (metal dumps with reptiles and probably house mice). You should be very careful collecting firewood and you should investigate fallen timber before needlessly removing it as this is prime reptile habitat. Look down the list and you will see that many species are dependent on timber debris for shelter and foraging habitat. Spare them a thought next time you throw a log on the campfire, especially as perhaps only 5% of the trees remain after massive co

Light to dark purplish brown with light bars across helish brown with



Skinks (Scincidae)

£ *Cryptoblepharus carnabyi*

## Blind or worm snakes (Typhlopidae)

- £ *Ramphotyphlops bituberculatus* Prong-snouted Blind Snake (0.3 m)  
Brown through to black with pointed snout. Burrowing in soil beneath rocks, logs or debris.
- £ *Ramphotyphlops australis* (0.5 m)  
Brown, grey-brown or purplish-brown, blunt rounded snout. Nocturnal and rarely emerge from shelter, eat termites and ants.

## Pythons (Boidae)

- £ *Liasis stimsoni* Stimson's Python (0.75 – 1 m)  
Light brown with dark blotches and bands. Nocturnal and terrestrial found in rocky outcrops, large isolated trees on watercourses and spinifex clumps
- £ *Morelia spilota* Carpet Python (2 – 4 m)  
Pale to dark brown with blackish blotches or variegations. Ventral surface cream or yellow. Nocturnal and crepuscular, arboreal or terrestrial burrows. Feeds on a variety of vertebrates.

## Elapids (Elapidae)

- £ *Demansia psammophis* Yellow-faced Whip Snake (0.8 m) @  
Steely-grey or olive-green, long and slender like a whip. Swift-moving day-active snake found around or under rocks. Feeds on reptiles and frogs.
- £ *Furina diadema* Red-naped Snake (0.4 m) ?  
Reddish-brown with dark-edged scales. Nocturnal sheltering under rocks, logs or litter, or crevices. Feeds on small skinks.
- £ *Pseudechis australis* Mulga or King Brown Snake (2 m) @  
Copper, reddish-brown or dark olive-brown with dark-edged scales. Nocturnal in hot weather and found in all habitats feeding on small mammals, reptiles (including other snakes) and frogs.
- £ *Pseudonaja modesta* Ringed Brown Snake (0.5 m) ?  
Various shades of brown with black head and black rings. Nocturnal in warm weather and found in shrublands and hummock grasslands feeding on skinks.
- £ *Pseudonaja nuchalis* Western Brown Snake (1.5 m) @  
Light brown to russet through to almost black, darker head region. Diurnal but nocturnal in hot weather feeding on small mammals and reptiles in dunefields and stony downs.

- £ *Pseudonaja textilis* Eastern Brown Snake (1.5 m) @  
Light tan through dark brown with dark-tipped scales. Day-active in grasslands feeding on small mammals and reptiles.
- £ *Simoselaps fasciolatus* Narrow-banded Snake (0.3 m) ?  
Cream to red back with irregular cross bands on the body and tail. Nocturnal foraging in open from a burrow
- £ *Suta suta* Curl Snake (0.6 m) @  
Pale fawn to reddish-brown with dark brown to black head. Nocturnal and terrestrial in Acacia scrubs feeding on small mammals and lizards.

## Guides:

- Cogger, H.G. 2000. *Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. New Holland Publishers, Sydney.
- Swan, G. 1990. *A Field Guide to the Snakes and Lizards of New South Wales*. Three Sisters Publications, Winmalee

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This guide is part of a UNSW research project in collaboration with the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. The aim of this project is to develop and implement products to support a vibrant wildlife tourism