



# Reptiles

## Blue-Tongued Lizards

- One of the most common lizards found in residential areas is the common blue-tongued lizard. They are not poisonous and are actually good for your garden as they keep snail and slug numbers down.
- These reptiles are relaxed and harmless and are happy to be left alone. They can easily be stepped over if they are momentarily resting in an inconvenient area.
- They are often found sunbaking on concrete, stone or brick surfaces to warm up at the start of the day.
- Blue-tongued lizards are often misidentified as a snake due to their long body shape and large heads. If you can't see its legs, or are unsure, keep a safe distance, take some photos and give us a call to help identify the species and provide advice.



- Sometimes a blue-tongued lizard will drop its tail as a defensive mechanism due to a threat. If you have found a tail-less one, you can transport it to the nearest vet or call Wildlife Victoria, as it may have further injuries.
- If the lizard is in an inconvenient area or a backyard where dogs are present, it can be easily relocated with a towel to the front yard. They have their own territories, so relocation should never be further than several meters. If you have used a towel to move a lizard a short distance, please remember to wash the towel afterward.

We hope that by increasing your understanding and awareness of our beautiful wildlife, you feel empowered to deal with wildlife situations confidently in an informed, safe and appropriate manner. For support at any time, please call our emergency response service for advice on **03 8400 7300** or report the details on our website: [www.wildlifevictoria.org.au](http://www.wildlifevictoria.org.au).



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## Turtles

- If you find a turtle in your back yard or on a road, take a few photos and give us a call. We will need to identify whether the turtle is wild or a pet, and if it is a native or an invasive.
- Turtles can walk up to 5km between waterways. Sometimes they get washed out of their hiding places, especially in late autumn and early winter. Please call us if you find a turtle; we can provide further advice.
- If you run over or find an injured turtle on a road, contain it in a box and transport it to the nearest vet clinic.



Common Long-Necked Turtle



Underside of Common Long-Necked Turtle



Murray River Turtle



Eastern Long-Necked Turtle

## Snakes

- If you find a snake in your backyard, please call a local licenced snake handler to safely remove it. Snake bites usually occur when the animal feels threatened. Never attempt to remove a snake yourself, even if you think it is not dangerous. Do not take the risk.
- Snakes of the same species vary in their appearance, meaning they are difficult to identify.

## Interesting facts

- Snakes and lizards don't use their nostrils to smell like humans do, instead they flick their tongue into the air to capture scent particles. A patch of sensory cells located in the main nasal chamber, called the Jacobson's organ, is then used to analyse the scent and work out what's around them.
- Most reptiles can't chew their food, so instead they will tear it or swallow it whole.

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### General information

- When temperatures increase during spring and summer you might see lizards, skinks, geckos and other reptiles come into your garden to bask in the sun.
- Reptiles are cold-blooded animals and need the sun to warm up prior to becoming active for the day.
- Native reptiles are protected in Australia and it is illegal for healthy individuals to be relocated.
- Lizards and skinks may have a large territory covering many back yards in your area. More often than not you will not be aware they are there. If you see one in your backyard, enjoy its presence as it will probably be on its way to your neighbours.
- You can create protected habitats in your back yard using rocks, logs, bricks or even roof tiles that reptiles can use.
- The most common injuries for our native reptiles are dog and cat attacks. If your dog or cat has found or attacked a reptile, please take it to your local vet or give us a call.
- Please look out for any reptiles when mowing your lawn or using a whipper snipper; they may be hiding in grass or small shrubs.

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