

Striped Legless Lizard

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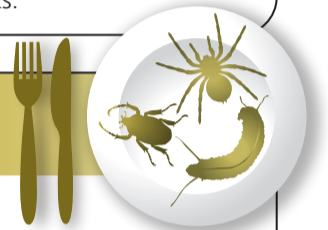


Habitat



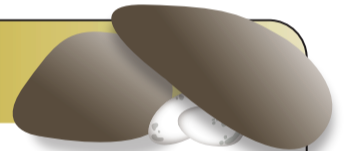
Striped Legless Lizards are found in the native grasslands of western and northern Victoria. Native grasslands grow best in volcanic soil and are home to lots of wildflowers and clumping grasses called tussocks. Striped Legless Lizards are shy creatures that like to burrow into the soil. They make their homes inside cracks in the soil but will also shelter under grass tussocks and rocks.

Diet



Striped Legless Lizards are stealthy carnivores. They slither through the grass searching for prey. Moth larvae are their favourite type of protein. They also hunt for spiders and insects like crickets, grasshoppers, and cockroaches. When Winter gets too cold and they can't warm up outside, Striped Legless Lizards rest in soil cracks. Their heart rate, breathing and body temperature drop to save energy.

Life stages



These normally shy reptiles become very active while looking for mates in late Spring. Females will usually lay two soft-shelled eggs between December and January. The eggs are left alone in soil cracks or under rocks and tussocks, and hatch after about 50 days. Scientists are still learning how long Striped Legless Lizards live for. Their best estimate is 10-20 years!

Threats

VULNERABLE

Striped Legless Lizards are vulnerable to habitat loss and fires that burn too often. Much of this reptile's habitat has been cleared for housing and grazing. Farm animals compact the soil and eat native plants, making it hard for lizards to find shelter. When fires burn too hot, too often and out of season, lizards have nowhere safe to hide and can't escape.

Conservation



Rangers and volunteers care for grasslands by using controlled, cool fire. If grasslands aren't burned in the right way regularly, plant matter and weeds can build up. Using small patches of fire leave places for animals like Striped Legless Lizards to hide. Fire is important in the ecosystem because it removes weeds and make space for new native plants to regrow.

Features and adaptations

- 1 Scaly, grey-brown skin to help camouflage in the grass
- 2 Skin can be shed to help their bodies grow bigger
- 3 Look like snakes but don't have venom or a forked tongue
- 4 Control their body temperature using heat from the environment
- 5 Drop their tails and jump (without legs) to avoid predators
- 6 Call to their friends using little squeaks
- 7 Long, streamlined bodies without legs makes burrowing easy

