



**REPTILE**

***Notechis scutatus***

**Tiger Snake**

AUS	SA	AMLR	Endemism	Residency
-	-	V	-	Resident



Photo: © Tony Robinson

**Conservation Significance**

The AMLR distribution is part of a limited extant distribution in adjacent regions within SA. Within the AMLR the species' relative area of occupancy is classified as 'Extremely Restricted'.<sup>3</sup>

Originally, two species of Tiger Snake were recognised in the AMLR region. Those from the upper Onkaparinga were thought to be an isolated population of Black Tiger Snake (*Notechis ater*). The few scattered Fleurieu district records were considered Eastern Tiger Snake, at the western extreme of its distribution.

It is now considered that all tiger snakes in SA are *N. scutatus*, as there is no clear justification in recognising them as different species. Similarly, the subspecies names that have been used have even less justification as they cannot be subjectively defined (M. Hutchinson *pers. comm.*).

The conservation status of the Tiger Snake is difficult to assess, however in the AMLR it is uncommon, very vulnerable and probably declining (M. Hutchinson *pers. comm.*).

**Description**

Highly variable in colour, ranging from light grey through olive-brown and reddish to dark, blackish-brown, sometimes with a series of narrow cross-bands formed by lighter yellow-edged scales. Belly cream, yellow, olive-green or grey, often with darker grey on throat and under the tail. Solidly built, with a broad, flattened head. Total adult length is about 1.2 m.<sup>2</sup>

**Distribution and Population**

Occurs in south-eastern QLD, NSW, VIC, south-eastern SA, the islands of Bass Strait, TAS and south-west WA.<sup>2,4</sup>

Originally it would have extended into the MLR along wetter gullies and watercourses from the lower River Murray. Generally limited to the Woodside area (upper Onkaparinga Valley), Balhannah and Verdun. It also occurs downstream of Strathalbyn (M. Hutchinson *pers. comm.*).

Post-1983 AMLR filtered records from localities between Balhannah and Woodside and one record from Para Wirra.<sup>3</sup>

Pre-1983 AMLR filtered records from Walkerville, Woodside, Moana, Myponga and Second Valley.<sup>3</sup>

**Habitat**

Occurs in a broad range of habitats, generally in open sclerophyll and river floodplains, especially where there is water and local cover.<sup>2,4</sup>

Found in well-vegetated drainage lines that feed into the Onkaparinga River. Their current scarcity within the region probably reflects their dependence on swamps, which have been greatly reduced in extent and area as a result of land clearing.<sup>1</sup>

Within the AMLR the preferred broad vegetation groups are Riparian, Heathy Woodland and Wetland.<sup>3</sup>

**Biology and Ecology**

Active on warm summer evenings, and attracted to farms and outer suburban houses, where they hunt mice and rats. Also feed on frogs.

Highly venomous and aggressive when aroused. Generally diurnal or crepuscular, but nocturnal in warm weather. Live-bearing, averaging about 30 young per litter.<sup>2,5</sup>

**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





### Aboriginal Significance

Post-1983 records indicate the entire AMLR distribution occurs in Peramangk Nation.<sup>3</sup>

### Threats

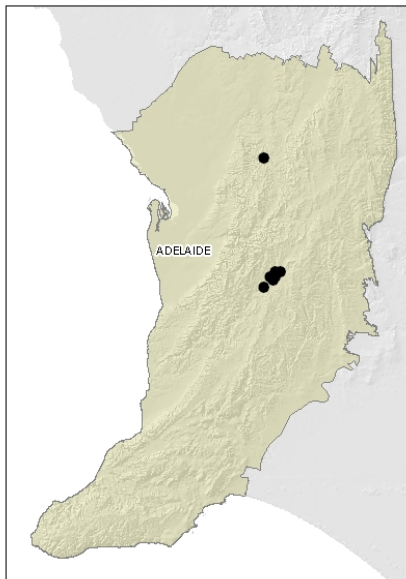
Threats include habitat loss or degradation, including the removal of shelter, predation by foxes, dogs and cats on young snakes, and deliberate or inadvertent killing.<sup>6</sup>

Other threats in the AMLR include:

- reduction in frog populations
- encroachment of urban development on habitat areas
- poisoning/ pesticides (M. Hutchinson *pers. comm.*).

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.<sup>3</sup> 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 Greer, A. E. (2006). *Encyclopedia of Australian Reptiles*. Australian Museum Online, Version date: 7 August 2006. Available from <http://www.amonline.net.au/herpetology/research/#encyclopedia>.

5 Turner, M. S. (2001). *Conserving Adelaide's Biodiversity: Resources*. Urban Forest Biodiversity Program, Adelaide.

6 Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment (2003). *Vulnerable Victorians. DSE's Threatened Species Recovery Projects Fact Sheet: Carpet Python (Morelia spilota metcalfei)*.

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