

Flinders Ranges scorpion

(*Urodacus elongatus*)

FAMILY: SCORPION



DESCRIPTION

The Flinders Ranges Scorpion is one of Australia's largest scorpion species.

The Flinders Ranges scorpion has six instars and reaches maturity at the fifth or sixth instar. Adult male's measure up to 12cm, and females 10cm in length.

The species display sexual dimorphism which is extreme amongst scorpions.

From the second instar some anatomical features can be used to distinguish gender, primarily in the tail and pectines.

Flinders Ranges scorpion males have longer tail segments than females and this feature is the origin of the species name *elongatus*.

Pectines are a comb-like sensory structure unique to scorpions that occur as a pair on the underside of the body. Males have longer pectines containing more teeth, than female individuals.

The exoskeleton of scorpions fluoresce bright green under UV light making individuals easy to detect in a relatively non-invasive way.

They are a 'sit and wait' predator, usually waiting at the entrance to their burrow with their claws spread and open waiting for prey to come within reach.

Like all scorpions they have a very slow metabolism and may only need to eat once a month depending on the season and will remain most of the time inactive within their burrow.

DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

The Flinders Ranges scorpion is endemic to the Flinders Ranges.

Known distribution is primarily within the fragmented ranges areas of the Flinders Ranges indicating that they are probably a relictual species that previously had a wider distribution, however has had to retreat to these refuge areas following historical landscape changes and human impacts.

SA Museum have sample specimens from sites ranging from Telowie to the Gammon Ranges.



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Female Flinders Ranges Scorpion
Image credit: Jennifer Munro



Male Flinders Ranges Scorpion
Image credit: Jennifer Munro

They burrow under rocks and are most commonly found on low slopes with moderate rock cover, such as in creek beds and floodplain areas.

They are more active at night, especially the males that don't always have a resident burrow but may move through the landscape in search of females and prey hiding under a rock through the heat of the day.

THREATS

A major threat to the Flinders Ranges scorpion is humans. Within Mount Remarkable National Park, the sites where Scorpions are most commonly found (creek bed and flood plain areas) are also the sites most impacted by humans, particularly via tourist activity.

Scorpions in general are cannibalistic and will eat smaller individuals given the chance, and this is a common risk during the mating ritual 'pas de deux' dance duet for the males who must give the female small stings with his venomous tail in order to subdue her.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Munro, J 2014, 'Sexual dimorphism & habitat of the scorpion *Urodacus elongatus*' Endemic species of the Flinders Ranges, South Australia

Copies of the published thesis are available for purchase via MoreBooks www.morebooks.de/gb/p_9783659499654

For more information

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