



FACT SHEET

WOOMERA SLIDER *Lerista elongata*

Text by Harald Ehmann and Michelle Watson.

There are about 17 species of sliders (genus *Lerista*) which occur in South Australia. Sliders have thin elongated bodies, relatively weak small legs and most have less than five digits per limb. A few species in northern Australia are limbless. Many have relatively small eyes. The Woomera Slider's diet is unknown but closely related species' diet includes insects, small spiders and ant larvae and it is likely that the Woomera Slider would have a similar diet.

DETECTION AND IDENTIFICATION

The Woomera Slider has mostly been found by raking or disturbing loose soil under leaf litter, fallen wood and large, flat rocks. It may also inhabit deeper soil crack recesses for at least some of its life. During warm nights it may slide and presumably hunt in nearby loose surface soil.

Sightings of Woomera Sliders are often limited to a fleeting glimpse of a tail or body as the lizard slides or swims into loose soil. The Woomera Slider is reddish brown above, and has a paler dark-flecked tail and a whitish belly. The upper third of the side of the neck and body has a distinct sharp edged dark stripe. All four limbs have three digits and its small lower eyelid is moveable. It reaches a head and body length of 6.3 cm with a tail length to 7.0 cm and a weight of 3.3 g.

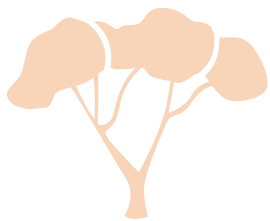
HABITAT AND DISTRIBUTION

Woomera Sliders have been recorded from a small number of widespread locations, often along watercourses on deep cracking clay plains with low open shrubland including *Sclerolaena* shrublands (Brandle 1998). Most of the sites receive significant water run-on from nearby low hills or outcrops and the resulting enhanced hydration of the soil may be an important habitat character for Woomera Sliders. The soil is usually well-laced with decomposing plant fragments and overlain by relatively shallow leaf litter.

POTENTIAL THREATS TO WOOMERA SLIDER

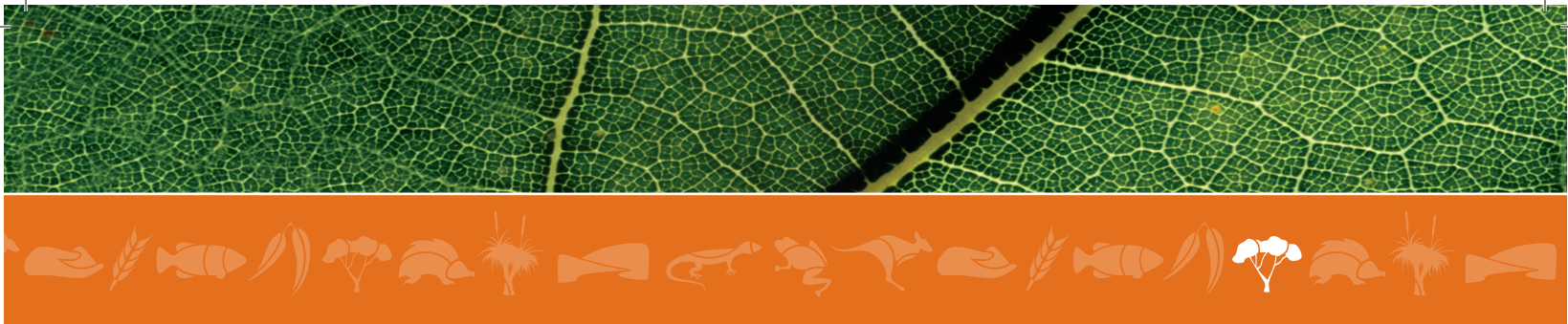
The Woomera Slider was first described in 1990 but it is still only known from 11 locations. Heavier stock densities at drainage lines and run-on areas are likely to disturb the leaf litter and soil profile sufficiently to render these sites potentially uninhabitable by this skink.

The relatively few specimens and locations that have been found to date may reflect a very patchy and sparse distribution. It is also possible that the species is more abundant than we can tell but its cryptic behaviour makes it difficult to detect.



Woomera Slider. Photographs by John Read.





CONTACT US

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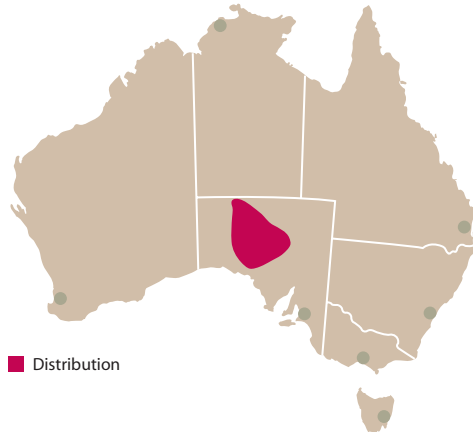
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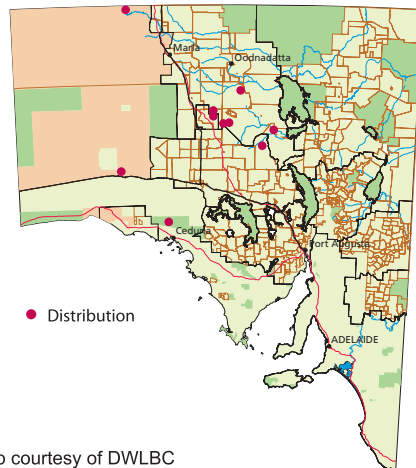
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WOOMERA SLIDER DISTRIBUTION ACROSS AUSTRALIA



■ Distribution

KNOWN DISTRIBUTION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA



● Distribution

Map courtesy of DWLBC

CURRENT RESEARCH

A better understanding of the Woomera Slider's distribution, population dynamics and habitat requirements (including information about soil crevice usage) are needed to more accurately determine its conservation status. It is possible that this species is more widespread in deep cracking soils but this can only be ascertained with specifically targeted and tailored survey techniques.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

If you have seen a Woomera Slider within or beyond the locations shown on the distribution maps please let us know. Please note the location (a GPS or map reference would be most helpful) to assist the relocation of the site. A description of the habitat would also be helpful. We will follow up all possible sightings as part of this study.

HOW CAN YOU CONTACT US?

To report your observation or for further information about Woomera Slider or this study please contact:

Community Fauna Officer

P. 08 8671 1083

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RESOURCES

Ehmann, H. (2006). South Australian Rangelands and Aboriginal Lands Wildlife Management Manual: a resource handbook. Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation, South Australia.

Brandle, R. (ed) (1998). A biological survey of the stony deserts of South Australia 1994–1997. Department for Environment Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs, South Australia.



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