

Gumnut Gazette

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Heath Goanna

Goanna's Galore!

There are 28 species of goanna in Australia and there are three you can find in South Australia! These are Goud's sand goanna, the Lace monitor, and the Heath goanna.

Goannas are the last large, native predators left in southern South Australia and are very important to us and our environment.

The Heath goanna, also known as Rosenberg's monitor, is classified as vulnerable in South Australia.

Within Australia, Heath goannas live in different habitats ranging from coastal and desert heaths to humid woodlands and thick leafy forests, known as sclerophyll forests.

Keep reading to find out more fun facts in this edition of the Gumnut Gazette...

Heath Goanna, credit to CWP Staff.

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Acknowledgement to country

The Department for Environment and Water acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep

spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country.

The Department works in partnership with the First Peoples of South Australia and supports their Nations to take a leading role in caring for their Country.

FUN FACT
Heath goanna's lay their eggs in termite mounds!
Check Page 3 to learn more...



Goanna Hide & Seek

Find-a-Word

S	S	E	T	I	M	R	E	T	L	E	R	R	R
R	E	A	E	L	B	A	R	E	N	L	U	V	O
L	S	L	V	N	S	E	G	S	C	A	L	E	S
Z	Z	A	R	S	R	N	O	V	D	T	N	A	E
R	S	E	Y	A	V	S	A	O	I	I	H	T	A
E	A	D	R	E	T	C	N	R	N	S	T	S	W
P	E	H	R	B	R	H	N	C	A	H	A	E	R
T	E	U	N	A	A	C	A	S	R	T	E	N	G
I	M	P	C	C	Z	T	L	U	A	E	H	I	G
L	O	N	G	R	A	I	E	A	V	R	A	G	N
E	N	N	N	L	A	T	L	R	W	A	E	A	N
A	L	A	S	C	L	E	R	O	P	H	Y	L	L
M	N	M	O	N	I	T	O	R	N	E	A	R	L
W	I	I	I	R	O	S	E	N	B	E	R	G	S

HEATH

GOANNA

MONITOR

LIZARD

ROSENBERGS

REPTILE

VULNERABLE

SCALES

CLAW

TERMITE

EGG

NEST

SCLEROPHYLL

VARANID

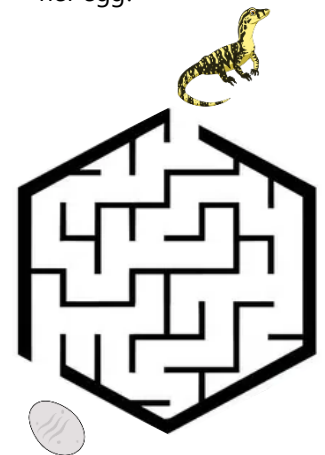
WORD JUMBLE

OROMITN

ANANOG

MAZE

Help the Goanna find her egg!



QUIZ TIME!

Q. Where do Heath Goanna's lay their eggs?

A. _____

A Termite Mound

Maze credit to: depositphotos

All About Me!

The Heath goanna *Varanus rosenbergi*

What do I look like?

The Heath goanna can grow up to 1.5 metres in length and weigh up to 1.9kgs. They have very strong legs, sharp curved claws, large, curved teeth and long muscly tails.

They are grey in colour with bands of yellow, orange or cream spots running down their body and they have a white belly. They also have a black stripe that runs from their eye down their neck. Most of the tail is black with yellow and cream stripes and the very tip is grey like it's body.

What do I eat?

Heath goannas are carnivores, which mean they eat meat and they're not very fussy. They will eat frogs, birds, other lizards, eggs, insects and mammals. They will also scavenge for already dead animals too (known as carrion).

My life cycle?

After mating in winter, a female Heath goanna can lay between 10-14 eggs! During summer, she digs a tunnel into an active termite mound and lays eggs there. Then, the termites will rebuild their nest around the eggs which keep them warm and safe. The male and female goanna will also stay around to protect the termite mound from predators.

Eight months later, during spring, the eggs hatch and the young goannas dig a tunnel to escape the mound, eating some termites along the way! Heath Goannas are fully mature and will start breeding at 9 years old, needing a year of rest in-between breeding attempts.

Heath Goannas at Cleland, photo credit (all) to CWP staff



Do you know?
Only 1 in 12 goanna babies will live to be one year old!



Like other reptiles, Heath Goannas are 'ectothermic', so they can't warm themselves up. They need to lay in the sun for at least 30 minutes each day before any activities!

Heath Goanna, Sand Goanna and Lace Monitor

These are the three largest goanna species in southern South Australia and they all look very similar. Can you see their differences?

Do you know?

Both the Heath and Sand goannas dig burrows for shelter. They also hide in their burrow if it is too hot, cold, or to get away from predators.

Heath



Sand



Lace





Colour Me In!



What does my home mean?

Heath

Heathlands form in areas where soil and wind prevent the growth of tall trees. Within a heath, you will find plants that are shorter than 2 metres, plants that cover at least a third of the ground area, and these plants are mostly shrubs and stunted trees. Heaths make a great cover for birds and reptiles hunting for insects and invertebrates.

Sclerophyll

Sclerophyll means a type of vegetation (plants, trees and shrubs) that have hard, leathery, evergreen leaves. These plants are found in areas that have hot, dry summers and

Image credit to Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, 2013.

Goannas at Cleland

Fun Fact:

Heath goannas have venom, but not quite like a snake.

Their saliva must get through broken skin to do any harm, and even then, there are only mild symptoms like a headache or feeling dizzy.

But they sure do have a strong bite!

We have two Heath goannas at Cleland Wildlife Park. Their names are Damon and Stefan. Pictured below on the left is Stefan, who is a bit more curious, and on the right is Damon's tail, who is not very social.

These two are not related but were both born at the Adelaide Zoo. Damon is 8 years old, and Stefan is 12 years old. Heath goannas can live around 20-25 years old.

Damon and Stefan's favourite food is mice, although they're not that picky and will eat anything our keepers offer them. They are both great diggers, but not very good climbers, unlike the Lace monitor. Their tails can also be used to whip away anything they see as a threat.

Did you know?
Monitor lizards get their name from the way they watch for prey, such as Stefan on the left, standing up and alert.



Stefan, standing alert. Credit to CWP staff.



Damon, hiding under a log. Credit to CWP staff.

April at Cleland Wildlife Park

This School Holidays:

Bush Kids (5-7 years)

Bush Play (2-4 years)

See our website to book your spot now!

Self-guided trail

Stay tuned to find out what the fun is about!

Bush Buddies and Puggle Play bookings open now!

*and booking out fast! Visit our website to book your space.

It is believed that there are less than 100 Heath goannas left in mainland South Australia!

Conservation Status

The Heath goanna is listed as Vulnerable in South Australia. Regionally it is classified as Critically Endangered in the Mount Lofty Ranges, which is where we are at Cleland.

Why?

- Due to the loss of habitat through land clearing, goannas don't have enough land to make their homes or find enough food to eat.
- The removal of termite mounds, fallen trees and logs gives goannas less option to lay their eggs and keep them protected.
- Getting hit by cars driving at high speeds, feral cats, dogs and foxes also pose a threat to Heath goannas.

Remember... Heath goannas are important to us and our environment because they help clean up and keep disease low through eating dead animals, so it's important we take care of them and their habitat!

Stay Tuned...

Exciting news for Cleland:

Our new Koala Loft will be opening soon!

Keep an eye on our social media pages for updates.