

Lord Howe Island Skink (*Cyclodina lichenigera*)

Description

Rich metallic bronze or olive above with numerous small brown longitudinal flecks or streaks, to about 80mm in length.

Conservation Significance

Endemic to the Lord Howe Island Group and Norfolk Island.

Listed as Vulnerable under the NSW TSC Act 1995.

Distribution

Rare on Lord Howe Island, more common on offshore islets – Blackburn Island, Roach Island and Ball's Pyramid, possibly other large offshore islets.

Ecology

Nocturnal. During day shelters under rocks, in cavities on boulder beaches, in weathered tunnels in calcarenite rock, in splits in trees and in holes in volcanic rock cliffs. Eggs of this species have been noted in these locations. Occasionally seen sheltering under upturned boats on beach margin. They feed on beetles, spiders, moths, ants and other insects amongst the leaf litter. Lay a clutch of one to three eggs and incubation is about 70 days.

This species is larger on Ball's Pyramid than on the main island, possibly due to an increased length of survival.

Population data/health

Rare on main Lord Howe Island due to predation by rats. During invertebrate surveys in December 2000 by Australian Museum Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Research only two locations were recorded for this species on Roach Island and The Saddle. Previously it had been

recorded across the whole island

Habitat

Wide range of forest types including lowland rainforest, montane rainforest and *Poa poiformis* islets.

Threats

Rats prey upon this species and are probably the main reason for its decline on the main island.

In the past, Cats were reported as preying on this species. No Cats remain on Lord Howe Island.

The introduced skink *Lampropholis delicata* which arrived in the early 1990's has spread from the settlement to the northern hills and Intermediate Hill and may compete for food with this species.

Impact on other species

Unknown.

References

Cogger, H.G. 1971. The Reptiles of Lord Howe Island. *Proc. Linn. Soc. NSW* 96(1): 23-38.

Cogger, H. G. 2004. *Draft Recovery Plan for the threatened lizards Christinus guentheri and Oligosoma lichenigera on the island complexes of Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands*. Department of Environment and Heritage, Canberra.



Photos: Ian Hutton

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