

Eulamprus quoyii

Cameron Watt, 2002

Authority: Duméril and Bibron, 1839

Common Name: Eastern Water Skink

Taxonomic History (King 1964): The genus *Eulamprus* has previously been known as *Sphenomorphus* (Fitzinger, 1843) and *Lygosoma* (Smith, 1937).

Description (Shea and Peterson, 1985; King, 1964; Wilson and Booth, 1998; Ryan, 2000): Length to 100 mm SVL and the tail is approximately twice the SVL. This is a fairly stocky, long-tailed skink. Body basically dark brown to olive, some individuals with greenish tinge on back. Yellow stripes on eye level from eye to posterior flanks. Upper sides dark brown or black, lower sides cream to white with dark spots. Tail usually uniform light olive green but may vary due to autotomy. There is 100% parietal contact, 36-45 mid-body scales, 26-36 sub-digital lamellae, 67-79 paravertebral scales. Limbs overlap when adpressed. Obvious external ear hole.

Similar species (Cogger, 1994; Spellerberg, 1972**(b)**; Greer, 1989): *E. quoyii* is a member of an allopatric species complex, but is more similar to *E. heatwolei* (80 mm SVL) and *E. kosciuskoi* (80 mm SVL) than any of the other members.

Range (Cogger, 1994; Spellerberg, 1972**(a)**; Veron and Heatwole, 1970): Range is from about Cooktown in north Queensland to approximately Bega in southern New South Wales, always below 1200 metres above sea level. Range also extends through Victoria to the Fleurieu peninsular in South Australia, utilizing the Murray-Darling River and associated tributaries.

Ecology and Behaviour (Brattstrom 1971; Spellerberg 1972a and b; Veron and Heatwole 1970; Veron 1969b; N.P.W.S.; Greer 1989; Australian Reptile Park): *E. quoyii* is closely associated with water and cool microclimates, though it can tolerate dryer areas. Often found among rocks along riparian zones, this species shows some territorial behaviour. These skinks display shuttling behaviour for temperature regulation, are heliothermic baskers and often return to a favourite rock after aquatic feeding excursions. Preferred temp in field is 22.2^oC to 33.9^oC but lethal extremes, shown in a laboratory, are 6^oC and 40.6^oC. This wide tolerance of temperatures helps to permit the large distribution shown above. A wide range of food items are taken by this omnivorous skink, but diet largely consists of other lizards, fresh water shrimp and both aquatic and terrestrial arthropods. In turn, *E. quoyii* is preyed upon by Kookaburras, snakes and feral and domestic cats. Being a riparian zone dweller, *E. quoyii* can be threatened by cattle grazing on watercourse banks and the associated erosion and dislodgment of rocks the skinks use for shelter and basking.

Breeding biology (Cogger 1994; Greer 1989; Veron (a) 1969; Wilson and Booth 1998; Australian Reptile Park): Live young are produced although, once thought ovoviviparous (Veron 1969a), Viviparous reproduction (Cogger 1994) occurs. One season from birth passes before the skinks are sexually mature and loss of tail can lead to reduced breeding potential for next season. Between two and seven offspring are born, usually in summer after the spring mating season. Gravid females are usually longer, 86mm to 108mm SVL, during the breeding season than at other times.

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