

# Threatened species of the Northern Territory

## Arnhem Land gorges skink

### *Bellatorias obiri*

#### Conservation status

##### Australia: Endangered

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

##### Northern Territory: Endangered

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976

#### Description

The Arnhem Land Gorges Skink is a large thickset ground-dwelling skink, with a snout-vent length of about 20 cm in adults. The body shape resembles the well-known blue-tongue lizards *Tiliqua* spp. It is grey to light brown above, with a brown longitudinal streak. The legs are short and chunky.

The species was formerly placed in the genus *Egernia*, and prior to 1990 it was more widely known as *Egernia arnhemensis*<sup>1</sup>.

#### Distribution

The Arnhem Land Gorges Skink is restricted to the Western Arnhem Land plateau and outliers (e.g. Jabiluka). Within this range, it has been recorded at relatively few localities, including Nawurlandja (Little Nourlangie Rock), Jabiluka, near Oenpelli, near El Sherana and Koolpin Gorge.

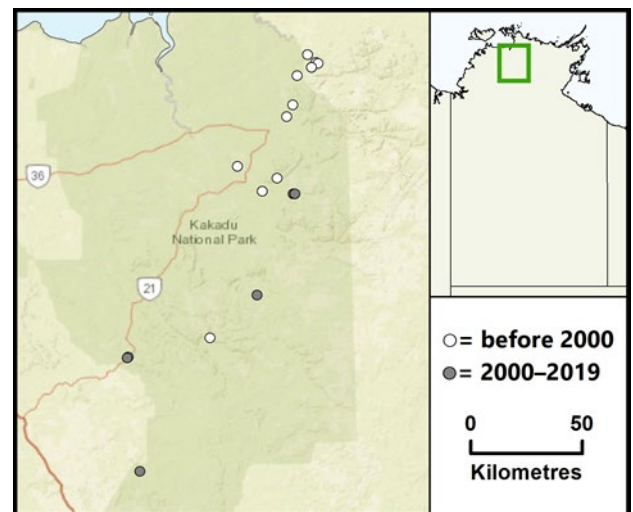
NT conservation reserves where reported:  
Kakadu National Park and Nitmiluk National Park.



Credit: L. McKay

#### Ecology and life-history

This species is largely restricted to sandstone outcrops, typically with extensive fissures and cave systems. It is probably at least partly nocturnal or crepuscular<sup>1</sup>.



Caption: Known localities of the Arnhem Land Skink in the NT ([nrmmaps.nt.gov.au](http://nrmmaps.nt.gov.au))

#### Threatening processes

The ecology of the Arnhem Land Gorges Skink is very poorly known. It may be affected by changes in food resources caused by altered fire regimes or predation by feral Cats *Felis catus*. Cane Toads *Rhinella marina* may have a negative

impact on populations of the Arnhem Land Gorges Skink through poisoning, but this will be difficult to determine.

## Conservation objectives and management

Current knowledge of the Arnhem Land Gorges Skink is insufficient to provide adequate guidance for management. Research is required to more precisely delineate the distribution, habitat preferences, and ecology of this species, and to identify threatening factors. This research should also provide a baseline for ongoing monitoring.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Sadler, R.A., 1990. A new species of scincid lizard from western Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. *The Beagle* 7, 29–33.
- <sup>2</sup> Begg, R.J., Martin, K.C., Price, N.F., 1981. The small mammals of Little Nourlangie Rock, N.T. V. The effects of fire. *Aust. Wildl. Res.* 8, 515–527.
- <sup>3</sup> Watson, M., Woinarski, J., 2003. Vertebrate monitoring and resampling in Kakadu National Park, 2002. Report to Parks Australia North. Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, Darwin.
- <sup>4</sup> Armstrong, M., Dudley, A., 2004. The Arnhem Land *Egernia* *Egernia obiri* in Kakadu National Park. Report to Parks Australia North. NT Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environment, Darwin.