

Why is it so important?

The Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard (*Tiliqua adelaidensis*) had been considered to be extinct until the discovery of a wild population in Burra in 1992. Prior to this only 20 specimens had ever been found and no wild populations were known.



Adult Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard



The holes of the Trapdoor spider (*Blakistonia*) are favoured by Pygmy Bluetongue Lizards



What does it look like?

The Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard resembles a miniature version of the larger Bluetongue Lizard.

Some distinguishing features are:

- > Pink tongue.
- > Smooth, flat and overlapping scales.
- > Grey-brown to orange-brown body with no obvious stripes across or along the body.
- > Short tail tapering to a point (much shorter than the head and body length).
- > Total body length no more than 20 centimetres.

Where is it found?

Pygmy Bluetongues live in old spider holes, often basking in the entrance of these during the warmer months. However, they are very sensitive to movement and will quickly retreat into their burrow if disturbed.

Pygmy Bluetongues are found in native tussock grasslands containing grasses such as Spear Grass, (*Austrostipa*), Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia*) and the dark green Iron Grass (*Lomandra*). Iron Grass is a good indicator of native tussock grasslands containing Spear Grass as it will not re-grow if the land has been ploughed.

Native grasslands in the areas indicated on the map opposite may support Pygmy Bluetongues. These native grasslands are an important ecosystem in the Mid-North of South Australia, but few patches remain.

PHOTO CREDITS: Aaron Fenner, Mark Hutchinson, Peter Robertson, Julie Schofield and Nature Foundation SA



Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard
Tiliqua adelaidensis

PYGMY BLUETONGUE LIZARD

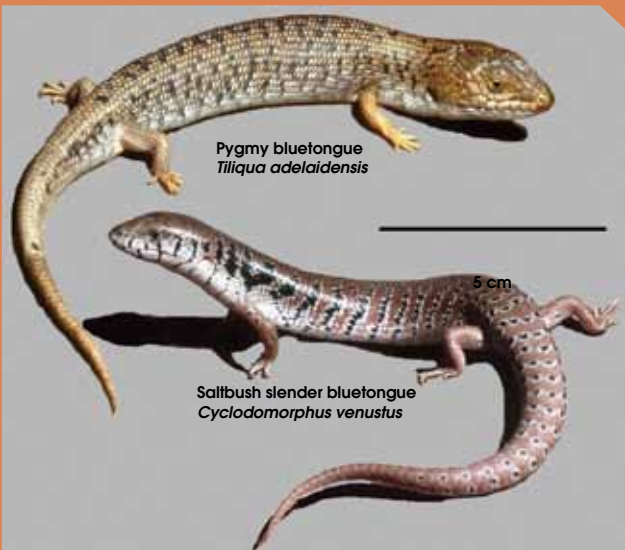
Identification
& importance

Don't get confused ... Get to know your lizards!

Other lizard species, such as the ones pictured below, can be confused with Pygmy Bluetongues.



Juveniles of the much larger Eastern Bluetongues (*Tiliqua scincoides*) have cross-bands on the body and tail.



Pygmy bluetongue
Tiliqua adelaidensis

Saltbush slender bluetongue
Cyclodomorphus venustus

Slender Bluetongues (*Cyclodomorphus venustus*) have smaller heads than Pygmy Bluetongues and characteristic black patches on the neck and above the forelimbs.



Tiliqua Nature Reserve

An important step in the protection of the Pygmy Bluetongues was taken in 2010 with the purchase of 80ha of native grassland near Burra by Nature Foundation SA. The reserve is known as 'Tiliqua' in reference to its inhabitants: the largest known colony of Pygmy Bluetongues (*Tiliqua adelaidensis*). In cooperation with the former landholder and Professor Bull of Flinders University, Tiliqua - A Nature Foundation SA Nature Reserve allows vital research into the protection of this species and its requirements for habitat management.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Tiliqua Nature Reserve

<http://www.naturefoundation.org.au/our-work/tiliqua/>

General Information

(including Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard Factsheet)

<http://visitburra.com/our-town-burra/pygmy-bluetongue-lizard>

Pygmy Bluetongue Conservation Association

Email: burravisitorcentre@bigpond.com

Pygmy Bluetongue Lizard research is conducted by the following organisations:

Flinders University – School of Biological Sciences

SA Museum – Herpetology Department

Zoos SA – Conservation and Life Sciences



Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources
Northern & Yorke Natural Resources Management Board
SA Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board
SA Museum



South Australia

- Current Distribution
- Historic Distribution



THREATS

Why has the Pygmy Bluetongue almost disappeared?

The main threats are:

- > Habitat loss due to:
 - ploughing
 - heavy grazing
 - weed invasion
- > Insecticides
- > Roads

Conservation Plan

A Recovery Team including representatives from the South Australian Museum, Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Flinders University, Zoos SA, Threatened Species Network, Nature Foundation SA, the Pygmy Bluetongue Conservation Association and Greening Australia are working together to:

- > Monitor populations of Pygmy Bluetongues.
- > Collect vital information to aid in the future direction of the management of the species.
- > Raise local awareness of the species, so that it is regarded as a unique and important part of our communities' conservation heritage.
- > Study and document reproductive and captive husbandry requirements with a small colony held at Zoos SA.
- > Work with local land managers to minimise threats to lizards on their property.