



Lizards and Turtles

Lizards live in most ACT gardens, often hidden from view. You are most likely to see a lizard warming itself in the sun during the warmer days of Spring or Summer and Autumn. Common lizards you will find are: skinks, blue-tongues, shinglebacks, dragons, goannas. The Eastern long-necked turtle lives in dams and waterways and is often found crossing roads after rain.

What to do if you find a lizard:

- Observe from a distance but leave it alone. It will bite or scratch if handled.
- If it is injured pick it up using a towel, preferably place into a box and take it to a vet or call ACT Wildlife.
- Many gardens have a resident lizard which will have been living there, unseen, for years eating insects, snails and cock roaches.. Be careful when mowing or weeding. Avoid leaving poisons and unconsumed pet food lying around .

What to do if you find a turtle:

- If you see a turtle crossing the road, first making sure it is safe to do so, pick it up and put it off the road in the direction it was going. Make sure it is well off the road.
- If you find a Red-eared slider turtle or a Macquarie Short-necked turtle, only pick up with a towel so you are not bitten and call ACT Wildlife for advice.
- An injured turtle should also be picked up with a towel. Remember to keep upright and do not transport in water because they will drown

Do not:

- Take lizards or turtles from the wild unless you find one injured.
- Release pet lizards or turtles into the wild. It is illegal and they could spread disease to the wild population. Released pets may not be able to feed themselves. Unwanted pet reptiles should be rehomed.
- Forget to wash your hands thoroughly with soap after handling reptiles or use a hand disinfectant.

Did you know?

- Blue-tongue lizards give birth to live babies. An Eastern blue-tongued lizard can have 8-16 little babies. A shingleback lizard might have 2 large babies.
- Native animals are protected by law and should not be harmed or harassed.
- The Striped legless lizard is endangered in the ACT. Macquarie short-necked turtles (usually unwanted pets) are feral in the ACT and pose a danger to other turtles, as well as other aquatic wildlife.
- A baby eastern long-necked turtle, the size of a 20 cent piece, will grow up to a dinner plate size over several decades. Their defence mechanism is 'musking'. It has a disgusting smell exuded from a gland.

For more information or advice contact ACT Wildlife on 0432 300 033 or call Canberra Connect on 13 22 81
or visit our website www.actwildlife.net

For more information on snakes and reptiles go to www.actha.org.au

This fact sheet is sponsored by ACT Herpetological Association

