

A statement for the purposes of approved conservation advice
(s266B of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

Approved Conservation Advice for
***Ctenotus zasticus* (Hamelin Ctenotus)**

This Conservation Advice has been developed based on the best available information at the time this conservation advice was approved.

Description

Ctenotus zasticus, Family Scincidae, also known as the Hamelin Ctenotus, is a blackish lizard growing to 6 cm, with a dark-brown head and tail, and a broad black vertebral stripe narrowly edged with white. It has a complex pattern of eight white stripes and pale dorsal blotches. It has brown limbs striped with paler brown and a whitish underbelly (Cogger, 2000; Wilson and Swan, 2003).

Conservation Status

Hamelin Ctenotus is listed as **vulnerable**. This species is eligible for listing as vulnerable under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (Cwlth) (EPBC Act) as, prior to the commencement of the EPBC Act, it was listed as vulnerable under Schedule 1 of the *Endangered Species Protection Act 1992* (Cwlth). This species is also listed as threatened under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* (Western Australia).

Distribution and Habitat

Hamelin Ctenotus is known only from a small area south of Shark Bay, Western Australia. The area of occupied habitat is no more than 150 km², being isolated from other suitable habitat by surrounding *Acacia* shrubland (Storr, 1984; Cogger et al., 1993). The species occurs in Mallee (*Eucalyptus* spp.) with an understorey of Hummock grassland (*Triodia* sp.) growing on red sandplains, and is not found in adjacent *Acacia* shrubland (Cogger et al., 1993). This species occurs within the Rangelands (Western Australia) Natural Resource Management Region.

The distribution of this species is not known to overlap with any EPBC Act-listed threatened ecological communities.

Threats

The main identified threats to the Hamelin Ctenotus are primarily overgrazing by stock, as well as general habitat disturbance from frequent and increased human visitation (e.g. tourism) and an associated increased likelihood of wildfire (Cogger et al., 1993).

Research Priorities

Research priorities that would inform future regional and local priority actions include:

- Surveys to determine the full geographic range of the species, especially of Mallee patches to the east and north of the known distribution.
- Research into the basic biology and ecology of the species in the field.
- Long term monitoring of changes in population size, habitat use and range.
- Research to determine if the species is declining and if so, to identify the major factors contributing to the decline.

Regional and Local Priority Actions

The following regional and local priority recovery and threat abatement actions can be done to support the recovery of the Hamelin Ctenotus.

Habitat Loss, Disturbance and Modification

- Identify populations of high conservation priority.
- Manage threats to areas of vegetation that contain populations of the Hamelin Ctenotus.
- Ensure chemicals or other mechanisms used to eradicate weeds do not have a significant adverse impact on the Hamelin Ctenotus.
- Ensure road infrastructure or development activities in areas where the Hamelin Ctenotus occurs do not adversely impact on known populations.
- Investigate formal conservation arrangements such as the use of covenants, conservation agreements or inclusion in reserve tenure.
- Monitor known populations to identify key threats.
- Monitor the progress of recovery, including the effectiveness of management actions and the need to adapt them if necessary.
- Control access routes to suitably constrain public access to known sites on public land.
- Undertake survey work in suitable habitat and potential habitat to locate any additional populations.
- Minimise adverse impacts from land use at known sites.
- Protect populations of the listed species through the development of conservation agreements and/or covenants.

Trampling, Browsing or Grazing

- Manage known sites on private property to ensure appropriate grazing regimes are conducted in areas where the Hamelin Ctenotus occurs.
- Prevent grazing pressure at known sites on leased crown land through exclusion fencing or other barriers.

Fire

- Develop and implement a suitable fire management strategy for the Hamelin Ctenotus.
- Provide maps of known occurrences to local and state rural fire services and seek inclusion of mitigative measures in bush fire risk management plans, risk register and/or operation maps.

Conservation Information

- Raise awareness of the Hamelin Ctenotus within the local farming community and the tourism sector.

Enable Recovery of Additional Sites and/or Populations

- Investigate options for linking, enhancing or establishing additional populations.

This list does not necessarily encompass all actions that may be of benefit to the Hamelin Ctenotus, but highlights those that are considered to be of highest priority at the time of preparing the conservation advice.

Information Sources:

Cogger, HG, Cameron, EE, Sadler, RA & Egger, P 1993, *The Action Plan for Australian Reptiles*, Australian Nature Conservation Agency, ANCA, Canberra, viewed 11 March 2008, <<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/action/reptiles/index.html>>.

Cogger, H 2000, *Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia*, Reed New Holland, Sydney.

Storr, GM 1984, 'A new *Ctenotus* (Lacertilia: Scincidae) from Western Australia', *Records of the Western Australian Museum*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 191-193.

Wilson, S & Swan, G 2003, *A Complete Field Guide to Reptiles of Australia*, Reed New Holland, Sydney.