

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

Approved Conservation Advice for
***Egernia pulchra longicauda* (Jurien Bay Skink)**

This Conservation Advice has been developed based on the best available information at the time this conservation advice was approved; this includes existing plans, records or management prescriptions for this species.

Description

Egernia pulchra longicauda, Family Scincidae, also known as the Jurien Bay Skink, or Jurien Bay Rock-skink, is a slender, flat-headed, medium-sized skink with a long tail. It is brown with a black stripe running down the side of its body.

Conservation Status

The Jurien Bay Skink is listed as **vulnerable** under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The subspecies is listed as Schedule 1 Fauna (fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct) under the *Western Australian Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, and is managed as vulnerable (according to IUCN criteria) by the Western Australian Government.

Distribution and Habitat

The Jurien Bay Skink is endemic to Western Australia. It is confined to a group of four small islands (Escape, Favourite, Whitlock, and Boullanger Islands) in Jurien Bay, 200 km north of Perth. There is a lack of data on the distribution of this subspecies on the four islands. Therefore, the area of occupancy is estimated to be the combined area of the four islands, which is approximately 0.45 km².

The Jurien Bay Skink inhabits rock isolates and low shrubland on four islands in Jurien Bay, Western Australia. It is found in pre-existing cavities such as crevices amongst limestone rocks and sometimes in seabird burrows (Cogger et al., 1993). On Escape Island, it has been seen in dense ground litter beneath low scrub vegetation, as well as under sheets of cardboard (Ford, 1965).

The subspecies occurs within the Northern Agricultural NRM region. The distribution of this subspecies is not known to overlap with any EPBC Act-listed threatened ecological communities.

Threats

The main identified threats to the Jurien Bay Skink are habitat disturbance, accidental fire, and competition and predation from introduced animals, all associated with frequent human visitation to the islands. These threats are likely to be ongoing, as visitor pressure is predicted to increase as a result of Jurien Bay's growth as a regional centre (CALM, 2004). Given that it only occupies small, low-lying islands, the Jurien Bay Skink could also be threatened by rising sea levels as a result of climate change.

Research Priorities

Research priorities that would inform future priority actions include:

- Design and implement a monitoring program on the four islands on which the subspecies occurs.

- More precisely assess population size, population trend, and the subspecies' geographic distribution on each of the four islands.
- Undertake research on the ecological requirements and biology of the Jurien Bay Skink.
- Consider the establishment of ex-situ populations.

Priority Actions

The following priority recovery and threat abatement actions can be done to support the recovery of the Jurien Bay Skink.

Habitat Loss, Disturbance and Modification

- 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.

Animal Competition and Predation

- Develop and implement a management plan for the control and eradication of the house mouse (*Mus musculus*) on Boullanger Island, and any of the other three islands where the house mouse has been sighted.
- Implement a surveillance program to prevent the introduction of invasive species, particularly introduced predators.

Conservation Information

- Raise awareness of the Jurien Bay Skink within the local community, and implement guidelines for visitors to the islands, to reduce the impact on the subspecies' habitat (e.g. general visitors to these islands could be confined to sandy beach areas or designated paths or boardwalks to limit disturbance to habitat).

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

Existing Plans/Management Prescriptions that are Relevant to the Species

The subspecies is found on islands classified as 'A' class Nature Reserves in Western Australia.

Information Sources:

Cogger HG, Cameron EE, Sadler RA and Egger P (1993). The Action Plan for Australian Reptiles. (Australian Nature Conservation Agency, Canberra).

Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) (2004). Turquoise Coast Island Nature Reserves: Management Plan (Management Plan No 50). Department of Conservation and Land Management, Perth.

Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) (2008). Western Australian Threatened Fauna Species Information Sheet: Jurien Bay Skink. Department of Environment and Conservation, Perth.

Ford JR (1963). The Distribution and Variation of the Skinks *Egernia pulchra* and *E. bos* in Western Australia. WA Naturalist 9(2), 25-29.

Ford JR (1965). The reptilian fauna of the islands between Dongara and Lancelin, Western Australia. WA Naturalist 9(7), 174-175.