

# The Frill-necked Lizard (*Chlamydosaurus kingii*)

## APPEARANCE

The Frill-necked lizard has conical front teeth and flat, chisel shaped rear teeth which are fused to the side of the jaw. Only the front teeth are replaceable. Its mouth is pink or yellow inside. It has a very long, whip-like tail which can be aggressively lashed at an attacker or used to counterbalance his bodyweight when it stands erect on its hind legs. It has sharp, curved claws which enable it to climb trees with speed and dexterity. The frill, a U-shaped cowl of skin is open at the back of the neck and is supported by two bony rods that extend backward on each contraction of the muscles at the base of these rods. The lizard can rapidly erect the frill into a ruff to warn off predators.

## LIFESTYLE

Frill-necked lizards live in the tropical savannah woodlands of northern Australia. It prefers areas with well drained soil that support a range of trees. Seeking the tallest trees, it spends up to 90% of its time perched in the canopy above ground. It is inactive during the dry season of April to August when it is hot and prey is scarce. However, after a few hours of heavy rainstorm the lizard becomes active and is soon on the lookout for its next meal. It seeks refuge in the trees at night and then moves out into the sunlight for 30-45 minutes of basking before it starts looking for food.

## FOOD

The Frill-necked lizard forages during the early morning and late afternoon when prey is active. It chooses a vantage point, usually in the low branches of a tree where it sits motionless, scanning for movement below. As soon as it spots a potential meal it descends to the ground and follows in pursuit. It then drops to all fours and seizes its victim in its conical front teeth. It lives mainly on moth and butterfly caterpillars but also eats termites and ants and occasionally small vertebrates.

## BREEDING

Frill-necked lizards live solitary lives except when ready to mate. The female lays leather eggs in a burrow which is later filled with soil and covered with leaf litter. Buried in the warm earth the eggs incubate for 2 – 3 months. The young hatchlings are less than 6" long at birth. They dig their way out of the soil and immediately begin searching for insects to eat. The Frilled-neck lizard is a protected species.

## LOCATION



■ Habitat of the Frill-necked Lizard in Australia



Derek Ingham – Mob. 0409 240 571  
Karen Ingham – Mob. 0409 240 577  
Bicraft Pty Ltd ABN 59 091 734 593  
PO Box 243  
THE ENTRANCE NSW 2261  
Ph. (02) 4388 3055  
[www.crocstars.com.au](http://www.crocstars.com.au)

