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## The Shingleback Lizard (*Tiliqua rugosa*)

### APPEARANCE

The Shingleback lizard is one of the largest members of the skink family (Scincidae). They have overlapping scales with the overall appearance of a “pineapple”. There are more than 300 species of skinks in Australia. They are usually dark brown all over, with or without yellow spots. The Shingleback has a very large head, a very short blunt tail and large rough scales. They can grow up to 410mm, some individuals may weigh more than 1kg. They are also known as the “Boggi”, “Sleepy Lizard” and “Stumpy-tailed Lizard”.

### LIFESTYLE

Shinglebacks usually live in open country with lots of ground cover such as tussocky grasses or leaf litter. They shelter at night among leaf litter or under large objects on the ground such as rocks and logs. Early in the morning Shinglebacks emerge to bask in sunny areas before foraging for food during the warmer parts of the day. They do not produce their own body heat and rely on the warmth of their surroundings.

### FOOD

Shinglebacks eat a wide variety of both plants and animals. They do eat more plant food than do other blue-tongue lizards.

### BREEDING

Shinglebacks live alone for most of the year but between September and November males pursue females and mating occurs. At this time males may fight aggressively among themselves. During the mating season Shinglebacks in western NSW are often seen crossing roads in pairs, the male following the female. The same pairs may re-form in the mating season over several years. Shinglebacks give birth 3 – 5 months after mating, between December and April. They are able to breed every year if there is sufficient food. They usually only have 2 or 3 young that measure up to 220mm in length and weight as much as 200g. The young are ready to look after themselves straight after birth and disperse within a few days.

### BITE

A bite from an adult Shingleback can cause pain, break the skin and leave a bruise but there is no venom and hence no long-term ill effect. However the bite site should be cleaned with mild disinfectant as with any animal bites.

Habitat of the  
Shingleback Lizard  
in Australia

