

AUSTRALIAN BLUE-TONGUED SKINK

updated March 2017



Range	New Guinea, northern and eastern Australia
Habitat	Semi desert to brush steppes, sometimes in agricultural areas
Diet (wild)	Plants, arthropods and snails
Diet (captivity)	Fruits and vegetables, crickets and wax worms
Description	Length: 6–20 inches. Heavily built, flattened dorso-ventrally. Ventral side is grayish, head is pale brown and the back has alternating streaks or blotches of dark brown and cream. Head is large, deep and conical. The eponymous blue tongue contrasts against a red oral cavity. Limbs are well developed and relatively short. Scales are smooth.
Lifespan	N/A
Reproduction	Females are ovoviparous, giving “birth” to 6–20 young each year. Babies are nourished by the body of the parent by means of a primitive placenta that develops between mother and embryo.
Behavior	Mostly secretive in nature, Australian blue-tongued skinks are diurnal ground-dwellers. Since their legs are so short, they move by waddling from side to side. Australian blue-tongued skinks are commonly sold in pet stores. Females stay within a defined home base. The males wander over an area the size of about 15 house blocks and have several females.
Our animals	1 female. Born: 1998 in captivity
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue-tongued skinks show little aggression. They are very docile creatures that tame easily. They are shy and secretive and seldom stray far from their shelters of hollow logs and ground debris. • The most peculiar behavior is use of their bright blue tongue. When disturbed, blue-tongued skinks gape their mouth open, stick out their bright blue tongue, puffs up their body and hiss loudly. This defensive behavior makes the animals look bigger than they really are and the blue tongues are a warning that these animals may be distasteful to a predator. • Blue-tongued skinks, particularly young ones, may drop their tails if necessary to escape a predator. The stump will heal quickly and a new tail will start to grow. It takes about a year for the new one to fully regenerate.

Phylum
Chordata

Class
Reptilia

Order
Squamata

Family
Scincidae

Genus
Tiliqua

species
T. scincoides