



Reptiles and Amphibians of Freycinet National Park

Reptiles

Reptiles adapt to their environment by regulating their body temperature through behavioural rather than physiological means. While they are often described as being 'cold-blooded' their temperature is in fact largely dependent on the external environment and can vary tremendously. Most species become active at an air temperature of about 18°C, although in still conditions, reptiles can maintain their temperature well above the surrounding environment by moving in and out of the sun. Some reptiles maintain their temperature by changing the colour of their skin. Reptiles are thus able to make far better use of their energy resources; they consume far less food and water than mammals or birds of the same weight and are able to live in very dry environments.

One of the most noticeable reptiles in the park is **White's skink** (*Egernia whitii*) a relatively large, fast-moving skink that lives in burrows under granite exfoliations. It is generally a grey-brown colour with white spots on the flanks and a distinctive stripe along the upper lips.

Also seen in drier areas of the east coast is the **Tasmanian blue tongue** (*Tiliqua nigrolutea*), the largest species of lizard in Tasmania. This conspicuous skink generally moves about in dense undergrowth and is seen only when it dashes across open areas such as roads. The distinctive blue tongue is used to 'taste out' the berries, flowers, and insects this species feeds on. Despite popular and local folklore, this reptile is not venomous and will only bite if handled.

Another common species is the **ocellated skink** (*Niveoscincus ocellatus*), a smaller, flatter species that is coppery brown in colour with black markings on the back and white spots ringed by black on the flanks. This species shelters in rock crevices and is common around the rocks at the western end of Wineglass Bay, where they forage for insects.

Common, though less easily seen species include the **metallic skink** (*Leiopisma metallicum*), a small bronzy-brown skink that forages among ground litter, and the

southern dragon (*Amphibolurus diemensis*), a member of the family that includes the thorny devil and the frill-necked lizard. The southern dragon is a rough-scaled, long legged lizard that can be seen in heathy areas on sandy soil.

Among the dune communities around Wineglass Bay lives the **three lined skink** (*Bassiana duperreyi*), which forages among tussocks and low vegetation in search of insects. It is a boldly striped species with a long tail, and may have a deep orange flush on the throat.

Three species of snake are found in the park. These are the **tiger snake** (*Notechis ater humphreysi*), **copperhead** (*Austrelaps superbus*), and the **white-lipped whipsnake** (*Drysdalia coronoides*). All three species are venomous, although a bite from the white-lipped whipsnake is unlikely to cause serious illness. Tiger snakes and copperheads, however, are dangerous and should be given a wide berth if encountered. Snakes are generally shy creatures and will only become aggressive if surprised or attacked. Watch where you put your hands and feet and be especially careful when stepping over logs or rocks, particularly in swampy areas.

Amphibians

A number of species of frog occur inside the park. Frogs are secretive creatures. Since they have permeable skins they are prone to desiccation in warm or windy weather, and for this reason tend to move about only at night. Although rarely seen, they make their presence known by their loud calls. Species recorded within the park include the **brown tree frog** (*Litoria ewingii*), a frog with a distinctive call of "reee.. ree.. ree.. ree", which can often be heard. Despite its common name, the brown tree frog is essentially a ground dweller, although it may call from low vegetation around the ponds it breeds in.

The **Tasmanian froglet** (*Ranidella tasmanienses*), is a small, inconspicuous species with a characteristic call that sounds a little like the bleating of a goat. This frog inhabits a number of small creeks around the park. It can be distinguished from its close relative the common froglet by its call and by the deep crimson markings on its belly.

The **common froglet** (*Ranidella signifera*), is found in large numbers in low-lying and temporary waterbodies

in the park. It is especially common in the swamps on the isthmus where large choruses can be heard throughout the year. The call is a cricket-like “crick..crick..crick..”. The belly is marbled with black and white.

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metallic skink (*Niveoscincus metallicus*) Photo: Mike Driessen



brown tree frog (*Litoria ewingii*) Photo: Mike Driessen

Reptiles

Name	Species	Abundance
Southern Dragon	<i>Tympanocryptis diemensis</i>	Native
Blue Tongue Lizard	<i>Tiliqua nigrolutea</i>	Native
Whites Skink	<i>Egernia whitii</i>	Native
Ocellated Skink	<i>Niveoscincus ocellatus</i>	Native endemic
Metallic Skink	<i>N. metallicus</i>	Native
Pretty Skink	<i>N. pretiosus</i>	Native endemic
Three Lined Skink	<i>Bassiana duperryi</i>	Native
Tussock Skink	<i>Pseudomoia entrecastauxii</i>	Native
Delicate Grass Skink	<i>Lampropholis delicata</i>	Native
Tiger Snake	<i>Notechis ater humphreysii</i>	Native
Copperhead Snake	<i>Austrelaps superbus</i>	Native
Whitelipped Whipsnake	<i>Drysdalia coronoides</i>	Native
Slender Blue Tongue or She-Oak Skink	<i>Cyclodomorphus casuarinae</i>	Native endemic

Amphibians

Name	Species	Abundance
Tasmanian Froglet	<i>Ranidella tasmaniensis</i>	Native endemic
Common Eastern Froglet	<i>R. signifera</i>	Native
Southern Toadlet	<i>Pseudophryne semimarmorata</i>	Native
Spotted Grass Frog	<i>Limnodynastes tasmaniensis</i>	Native
Brown Tree Frog	<i>Litoria ewingii</i>	Native
Growling Grass Frog (or Golden Bell Frog)	<i>L. raniformis</i>	Native

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