

SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Pseudemoia pagenstecheri Tussock Skink

Group: Chordata (vertebrates), Reptilia (reptiles), Squamata (Snakes, Lizards and Skinks), Scincidae

Status: *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*: vulnerable
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Not listed

Endemic: Found in Tasmania and elsewhere

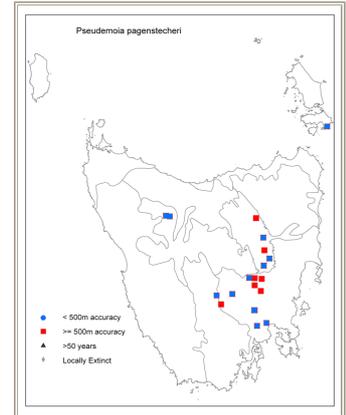
Status:



In Tasmania, the Tussock Skink (*Pseudemoia pagenstecheri*), a ground-dwelling lizard, occurs in grassland and grassy woodland habitats at a range of elevations. Records of the species in Tasmania are in small disconnected patches of habitat in the Midlands, inland near Cradle Mountain and the eastern Bass Strait islands. The primary threat to the species continuing loss and degradation of grassland and grassy woodland habitat, currently due to activities such as overfrequent burning or grazing, urban encroachment, plantation establishment and irrigation schemes, as well as the spread of gorse. Protection of known sites and potential habitat from such activities is the key requirement for the species.

Key Points

- **Important:** Is this species in your area? Do you need a permit? Ensure you've covered all the issues by checking the Planning Ahead page.
- **Important:** Different threatened species may have different requirements. For any activity you are considering, read the Activity Advice pages for background information and important advice about managing around the needs of multiple threatened species.



Habitat

- 'Habitat' refers to both known habitat for the species (i.e. in or near habitat where the species has been recorded) and potential habitat (i.e. areas of habitat with appropriate characteristics for the species and within the species' potential range which have not yet been adequately surveyed).
- If in doubt about whether a site represents potential habitat for this species, contact the Threatened Species Section for further advice.
- The known range of the Tussock Skink covers a number of widely scattered locations, ranging from The Domain near Hobart, through the lowland Midlands, extending to higher elevations near Cradle Mountain, and a single island in Bass Strait. The potential range of the Tussock Skink includes any areas of potential habitat within the known range.
- Habitat for the Tussock Skink corresponds to 'Lowland grassland', 'Highland grassland' and Grassy woodland and forest'. See Grassy Bush in the NRE Bushcare Toolkit for more information on managing these vegetation types.
- Habitat for the Tussock Skink includes the following elements: treeless tussock grassland and grassy open woodland at virtually any elevation where suitable habitat is present; typical habitat in the warmer lowland part of the range is native grassland dominated by *Poa labillardierei* (tussock grass) and species of *Rytidosperma* (wallaby grasses), *Themeda triandra* (kangaroo grass) and *Microlaena stipoides* (weeping grass).

What to avoid

- Clearing of native grassland for agriculture, forestry and urban development
- Overgrazing of habitat
- Overburning of habitat
- Infestation of habitat by weeds

Surveying

Key	Survey reliability more info
M	Peak survey period
M	Potential survey period
M	Non-survey period

To ensure you follow the law - check whether your survey requires a permit. Always report any new records to the Natural Values Atlas, or send the information direct to the Threatened Species Section. Refer to the Activity Advice: Surveying page for background information.

<i>Pseudemoia pagenstecheri</i>	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
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S	S	O	O	N	N	D	D	J	J	F	F	M	M	A	A	M	M	J	J	J	J	A	A
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- There have been few systematic surveys for the Tussock Skink.
- Specialist confirmation is recommended to identify the Tussock Skink.
- Methods of survey include pitfall trapping and use of temporary artificial habitat (e.g. tiles placed amongst tussock grass) but note that such methods are likely to require specialist input with respect to the design of the sampling regime.

Helping the species

- In order to recognise the species if it occurs on your property, learn to identify the Tussock Skink. If in doubt, seek expert assistance with identification.
- If you live or work in the area where the species occurs (see distribution map, above), look out for and record any observations of the species. All records of this species can provide important information on distribution and abundance
- If you are interested in knowing for certain whether the species occurs on your land, organise a formal survey. You may need to employ an ecological consultant to do this. Your local Bushcare or Field Naturalist club may be able to assist you with a survey.
- Important! Always report any observations of the species to the NRE Natural Values Atlas, or else provide the data direct to the Threatened Species Section. Records stored on the NVA are a permanent record and are accessible to other people interested in this species.
- Consider the needs of the whole habitat. Preserving a threatened species' habitat is the best way to manage both the species and the environment in which it lives.
- Habitat for the Tussock Skink corresponds to 'Lowland grassland', 'Highland grassland' and 'Grassy woodland and forest'. See Grassy Bush in the NRE Bushcare Toolkit for more information on managing these vegetation types.
- For long-term protection of localities on private land – consider protection of habitat through a vegetation management agreement or conservation covenant. See the NRE Private Land Conservation Program for more details.

Cutting or clearing trees or vegetation

- Historically, significant areas of habitat have been cleared, mainly through agricultural, forestry and urban activities.
- To prevent loss of habitat - avoid clearing remaining areas of habitat.
- Prime habitat for the Tussock Skink is characterised by medium to tall tussock grasses. The species is easily disturbed, and tall grass tussocks provide protection from predators.
- To maintain habitat quality - manage slashing of habitat so as to maintain medium to tall tussock grasses.

Burning

- Prime habitat for the Tussock Skink is characterised by medium to tall tussock grasses. The species is easily disturbed, and tall grass tussocks provide protection from predators.
- To maintain habitat quality - do not overburn habitat, and conduct controlled burns so as to maintain medium to tall tussock grasses. For more information on managing burning in Tussock Skink habitat, contact the Threatened Species Section.

Agriculture

- Historically, significant areas of habitat have been cleared as a result of urban development.
- To prevent loss of habitat - avoid clearing remaining areas of habitat for this species.

Subdivision

- Historically, significant areas of habitat have been cleared as a result of agriculture.
- To prevent loss of habitat - avoid clearing remaining areas of habitat.

Further information

Check also for listing statement or notesheet pdf above (below the species image).

Cite as: Threatened Species Section (2024). *Tussock Skink (Pseudemoia pagenstecheri): Species Management Profile for Tasmania's Threatened Species Link*. <https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/Tussock-Skink.aspx> Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Accessed on 20/9/2024.

Contact details: Threatened Species Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (1300 368 550).

Permit: A permit is required under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to 'take' (which includes kill, injure, catch, damage, destroy and collect), keep, trade in or process any specimen or products of a listed species. Additional permits

may also be required under other Acts or regulations to take, disturb or interfere with any form of wildlife or its products, (e.g. dens, nests, bones). This may also depend on the tenure of the land and other agreements relating to its management.