

Key to the Legless Lizards of South Australia



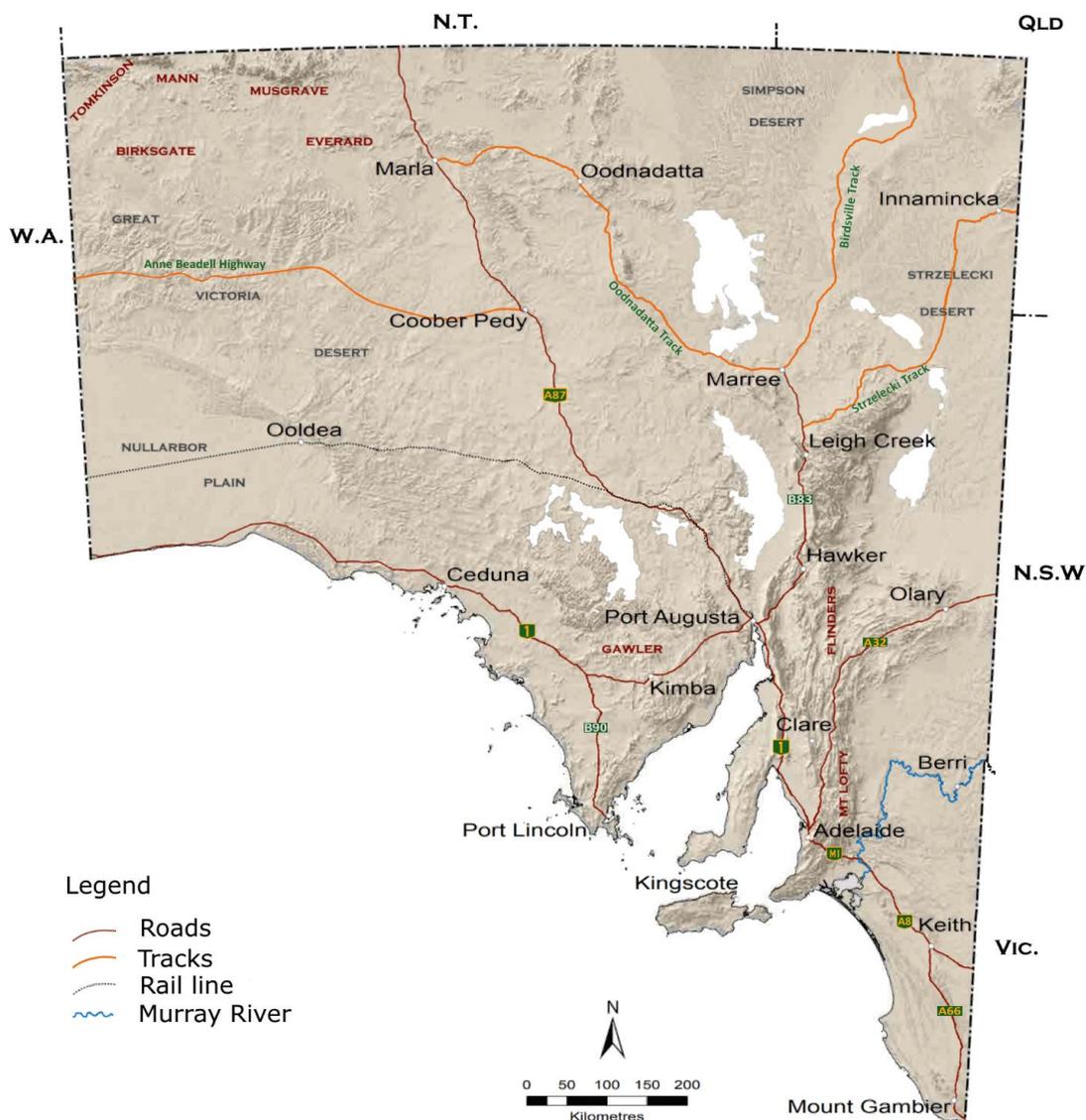
Burton's Legless Lizard, *Lialis burtonis*

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The Legless Lizards of South Australia

Geographic Distribution



Map* showing place names and geographical features as well as some main roads and major desert tracks, to assist with interpreting the following distribution maps.

Distribution maps show known and likely occurrence, given suitable habitat.

*modified from original by Department of Environment & Water.



Aprasia aurita



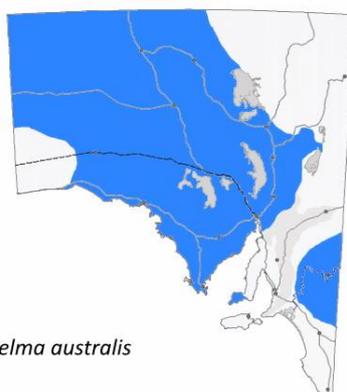
Aprasia inaurita



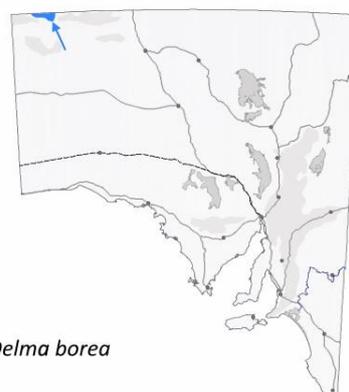
Aprasia pseudopulchella



Aprasia striolata



Delma australis



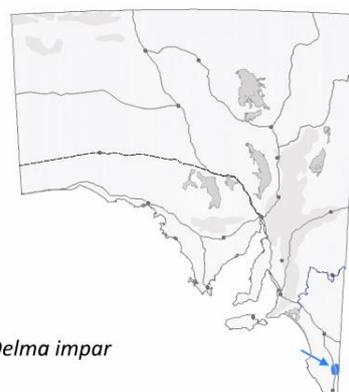
Delma borea



Delma butleri



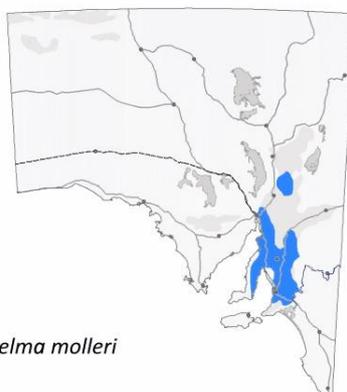
Delma desmosa



Delma impar



Delma inornata



Delma molleri



Delma nasuta



Key to the Legless Lizards of South Australia

Family Pygopodidae

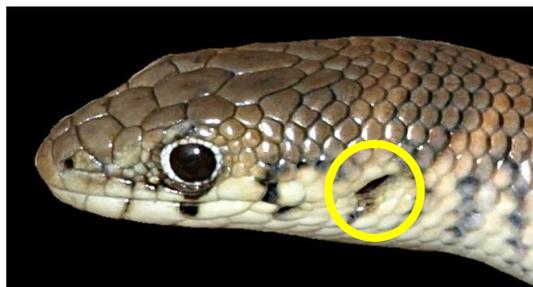
Sex of pygopods is determinable externally in a similar way to their close relatives, the geckos. Males have a projecting, conical scale, the cloacal spur on either side of the vent, underneath the hind limb flap or lying just below it in species in which the flap is small (see 4a and 4b, cloacal images).

1. a. Ear opening absent or hidden by overlapping body scales 2
- b. Ear opening obvious as a hole or slit 3



Aprasia striolata

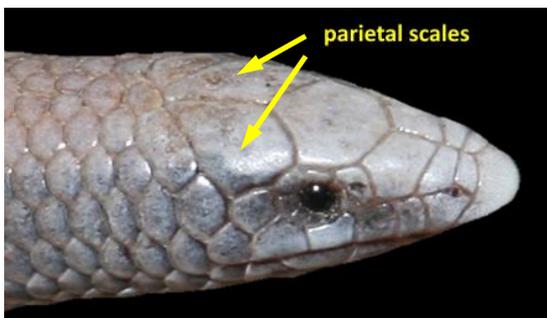
1a. No ear opening



Delma mollerii

1b. Ear opening visible

- 2. a. Snout flattened, wedge-shaped, sharp-edged; eye small; enlarged parietal scales present ***Ophidiocephalus taeniatus***
Bronzeback
- b. Snout conical, rounded; eye very large; no enlarged parietal scales..... ***Aprasia*** (p. 7)



Ophidiocephalus taeniatus

2a. Wedge-shaped snout and small eye



Aprasia inaurita

2b. Rounded snout and large eye

- 3. a. Snout very elongate, head about three times as long as wide, mostly covered by small scales; colour beige to grey, variably striped or plain ***Lialis burtonis***
Burton's Legless Lizard
- b. Snout rounded, head no more than twice as long as wide and covered by enlarged head shields **4**



Lialis burtonis

3a. Snout long and pointed, small head scales



Pygopus lepidopodus

3b. Snout rounded, large plate-like head scales



Lialis burtonis

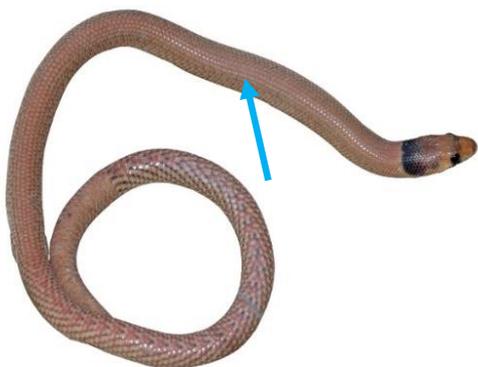
3a. Strongly patterned



Lialis burtonis

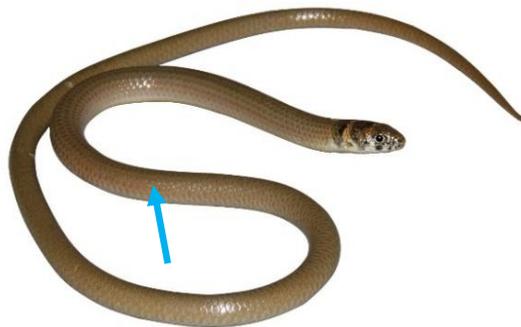
3a. Weakly patterned

- 4.**
- a.** Relatively robust with small scales; hind limb flaps large, bulging; dorsal body scales may be weakly to strongly keeled, relatively small (in 20 or more rows); precloacal pores present . [Pygopus](#) (p. 14)
 - b.** Relatively slender with large scales; hind limb flaps rather small, flat; dorsal body scales always smooth, relatively large (in 18 or fewer rows); no precloacal pores [Delma](#) (p. 9)



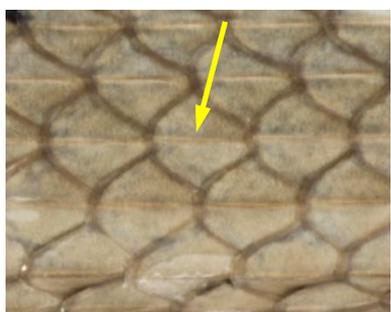
Pygopus nigriceps

4a. Relatively robust body and head; numerous small body scales



Delma tinctoria

4b. Relatively slender body and small head; fewer and larger body scales



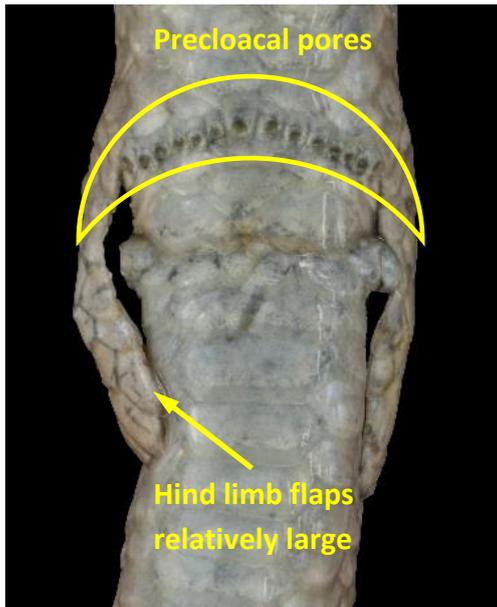
Pygopus lepidopus

4a. Keeled scales



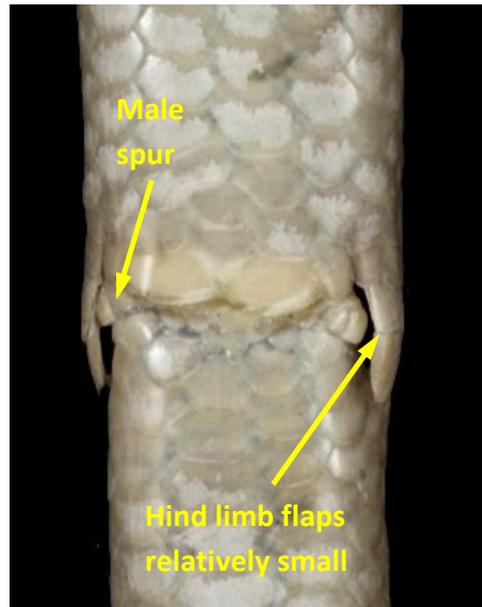
Delma australis

4b. Smooth scales



Pygopus lepidopodus

4a. Precloacal pores present



Delma australis

4b. No precloacal pores

Key to the South Australian species of *Aprasia*

1. a. Tail pink to orange. 2
- b. No pink or orange on tail 3
2. a. No or only very faint dark markings on body or tail; snout orange-pink *A. inaurita*
Red-tailed
Worm-lizard
- b. Dark flecks on scales, especially lateral scales and on tail; snout mottled dark brown. *A. pseudopulchella*
Flinders Worm-lizard

*A. inaurita*

2a. Orange tail and tip of snout, unpatterned

*A. pseudopulchella*

2b. Tail tinged with pink, mottled with dark grey

*A. inaurita*

2a. Plain orange-pink snout

*A. pseudopulchella*

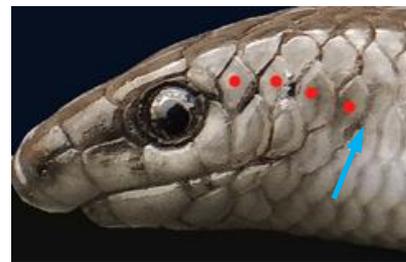
2b. Dark-mottled snout

3. a. Each dorsal scale with a central dark line but never with continuous black stripes; ear opening present, but hidden under a scale (the fourth of the series that starts with the primary temporal); 14 midbody scale rows. *A. aurita*
Eared Worm-lizard
- b. Mid-dorsal scales plain or only weakly speckled; most specimens with prominent dark lines along the sides of the body; no ear opening; 12 midbody scale rows *A. striolata*
Lined Worm-lizard



A. aurita

3a. Dorsal scales with a dark median line



A. aurita

3a. Fourth scale conceals the ear opening



A. striolata

3b. Strong black and white lateral stripes



A. striolata

3b. Some specimens lack or only have weak lateral markings

Key to the South Australian species of *Delma*

- 1. a. Body patterned with light and dark stripes down each side (stripes sometimes obscure, especially in small juveniles); nasal undivided and fused to first supralabial below the nostril ***D. impar***
Striped Delma
- b. Body unstriped or with vague lines caused by dark centres of all dorsal scale rows; nasal divided and first supralabial completely distinct **2**



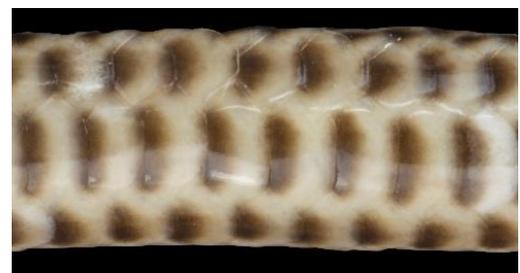
D. impar

2a. Stripes along the sides of the body; middle of back unmarked

- 2. a. Head and body similarly coloured, grey-brown to olive green **3**
- b. Head and nape darker than rest of body, often very dark grey to black, and often with a darker or lighter collar **4**
- 3. a. Sides, and especially belly scales each with prominent blackish central spot ***D. nasuta***
Sharp-snouted Delma
- b. Sides and belly scales without black spots; belly unmarked white to light grey **5**



D. nasuta



D. nasuta

3a. Belly scales heavily spotted

3a. Scales on the sides and sometimes also the back each with a darker spot

- 4 a. Temperate SE grassland; white eyelid scales, but remaining scales around eye and sides of head uniformly olive coloured; usually five scales on top of snout between the rostral (R) and the frontal (F) ***D. inornata***
 Patternless Delma
- b. Arid and semiarid porcupine bush ('spinifex'); white eyelid scales, plus scales around eye and side of head variegated with whitish patches; seven scales on top of snout between the rostral (R) and frontal (F) ***D. butleri***
 Unbanded Delma



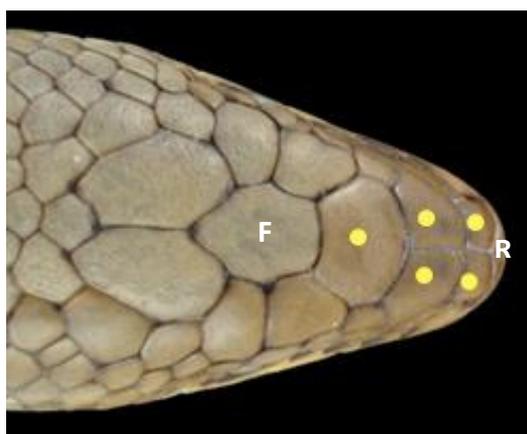
D. inornata

4a. Sides of the head uniformly coloured



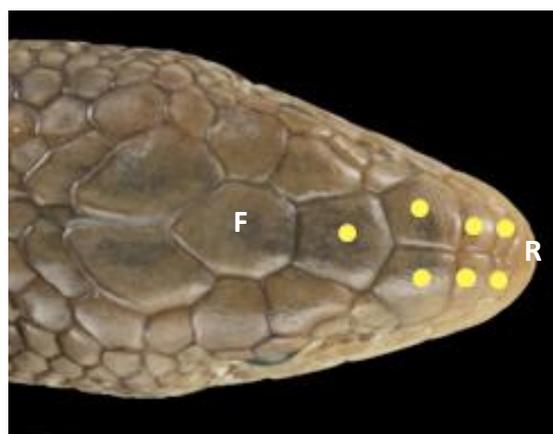
D. butleri

4b. Sides of the head with lighter markings



D. inornata

4a. 5 snout scales



D. butleri

4b. 7 snout scales

- 5 a. No light and dark collar marking behind the head, although there may be numerous small irregular whitish bars or lines; belly scales scarcely any wider than the adjacent body scales ***D. australis***
 Marble-faced Delma
- b. Usually some trace of a light collar, edged behind by a darker band, although may be faded in older specimens; middle rows of belly scales twice as wide as the adjacent body scales **6**



D. australis

5a. Mottled black head markings with light and dark neck barring



D. australis

5a. Weakly marked without light or dark neck bars



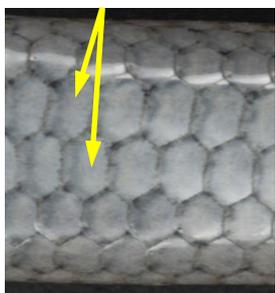
D. tincta

5b. Strongly contrasting head bands and collar



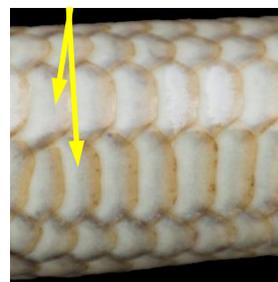
D. mollerii

5b. Obscure collar



D. australis

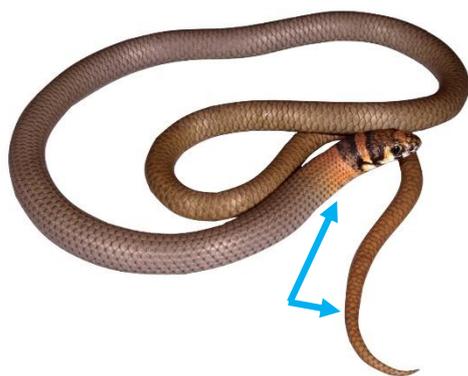
5a. Belly scales not much enlarged



D. mollerii

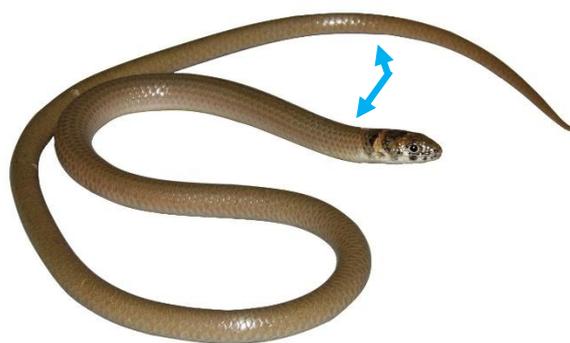
5b. Belly scales much wider than other scales

- 6**
- a.** Body greyish becoming orange on the neck and tail; throat with irregular black bands ***D. petersoni***
Painted Delma
 - b.** Body and tail uniformly grey brown; throat white **7**



D. petersoni

6a. Neck and tail sandy orange



D. tincta

6b. Neck and tail similar colour to rest of body



D. petersoni

6a. Throat heavily banded in black



D. borea

6b. Throat white

- 7. a. Five scales on top of snout between the rostral and the frontal (see Fig 4a) 8
- b. Seven scales on top of snout between the rostral and frontal (see Fig. 4b) 9

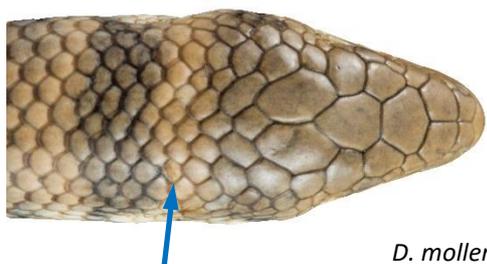
- 8. a. Younger animals with a blackish grey 'cap' and nape, usually interrupted by a narrow light brown collar, the dark markings less contrasting in larger animals; usually with several tapering bars on the neck; fourth upper labial below eye; 16 midbody scale rows . . .

D. mollerii
Gulfs Delma

- b. Younger animals with head and neck blackish or dark brown broken by three light, narrow rings, fading to weakly contrasting in larger animals, sometimes completely disappearing so that the head and body are uniformly coloured; third upper labial below eye; 14 midbody scale rows

D. tincta
Excitable Delma
and
D. hades
Hellish Excitable
Delma

Delma hades is genetically distinct from *D. tincta* and the two species are known to extensively overlap in their distributions. At present there are no known consistent external differences between the two species, so that in the absence of any genetic data they cannot be distinguished. Currently there are too few South Australian records of genetically confirmed *D. hades* to determine whether there is any particular pattern of distribution that might assist in separating it from *D. tincta* in the field.



D. molleri
8a. Single obscure pale band behind head



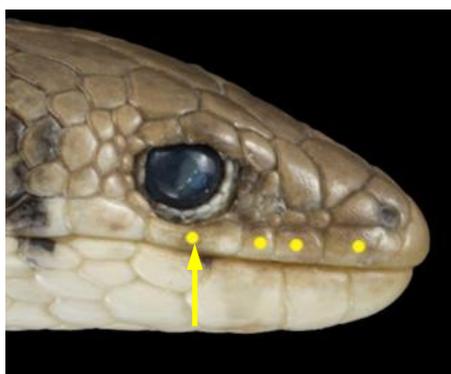
D. molleri
8a. Several tapering dark markings on side of neck



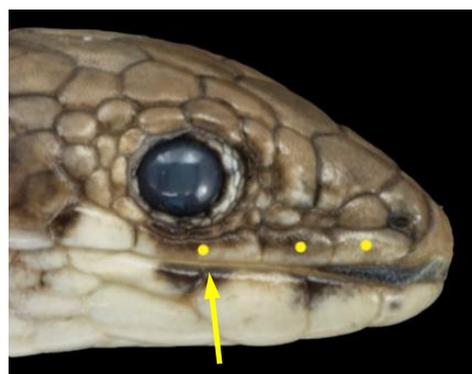
D. tincta
8b. 3 pale head bands



D. tincta
8b. Older animal – head banding reduced



D. molleri
8a. 4th upper labial scale below the eye



D. tincta
8b. 3rd upper labial scale below the eye

- 9**
- a.** Dorsal head pattern faded in adults ; fourth upper labial below the eye ***D. borea***
Rusty-topped Delma
 - b.** Dorsal head pattern strongly marked in adults; third upper labial below eye; ***D. desmosa***
Banded Delma



D. borea
9a. Head bands fade in adults

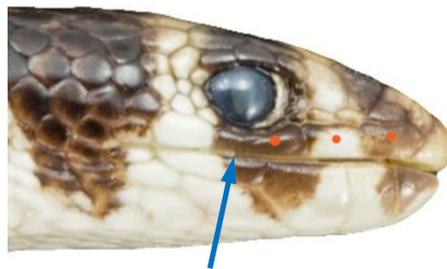


D. desmosa
9b. Head bands strongly contrasting in adults



D. borea

9a. 4th upper labial scale below the eye

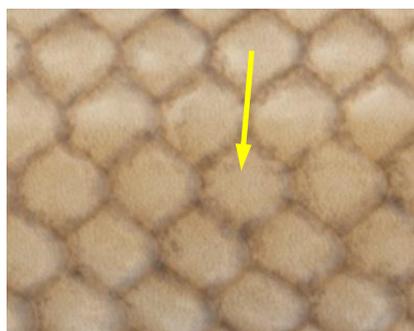


D. desmosa

9b. 3rd upper labial scale below the eye

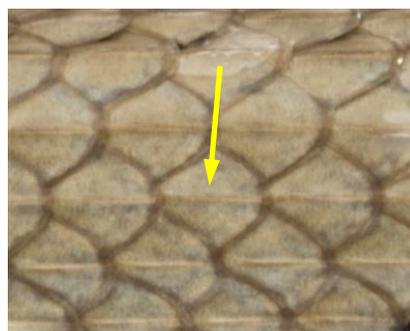
Key to the South Australian species of *Pygopus*

- 1. a. All dorsal scales smooth, shiny; strong black collar and blotch over the eye ***P. nigriceps***
Western Hooded Scaly-foot
- b. Dorsal scales moderately to strongly keeled; skin with a satin to matt surface; head with various patterns but not as above **2**



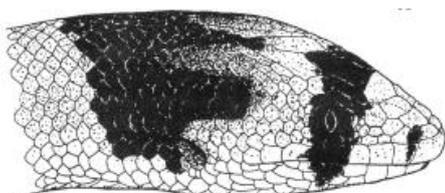
P. nigriceps

1a. Smooth scales



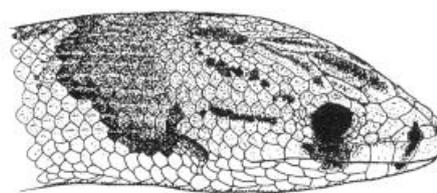
P. lepidopodus

1b. Keeled scales



P. nigriceps

- 1a.** Dark head pattern of intense black collar and additional black patches over the eyes and nostril



P. schraderi

- 1b.** Dark head pattern (if present) dark grey collar with many speckles and blotches of brown and grey

- 2. a. Dark grey to blackish cap, best developed on the back of the head, contrasting with the adjacent forebody ***P. schraderi***
Eastern Hooded Scaly-foot
- b. Head same colour as adjacent forebody, at most with dark lines/blotches on top of the head and around the eye; overall colour pattern very variable ***P. lepidopodus***
Common Scaly-foot



P. schraderi

2a. Head and neck darker than rest of body



P. lepidopodus

2b. Head and neck not darker



P. lepidopodus

2b. Strongly patterned specimen



P. lepidopodus

2b. Weakly patterned specimen