

Key to the Goannas of South Australia



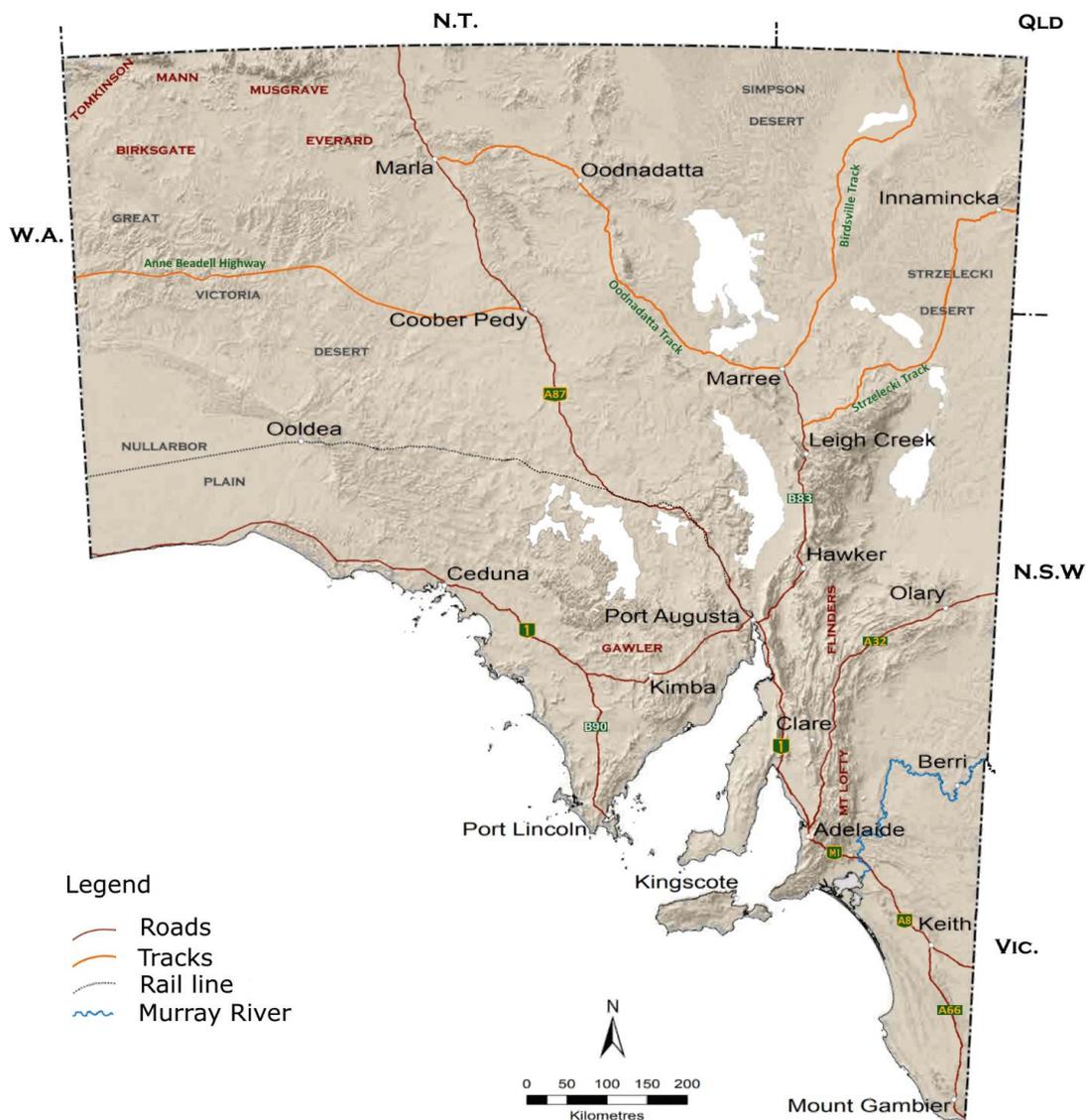
Sand Goanna, *Varanus gouldii*

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The Goannas of South Australia

Geographic Distribution



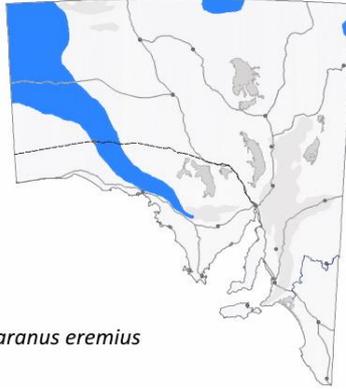
Map* showing place names and geographical features as well as some main roads and major desert tracks, to assist with interpreting the following distribution maps.

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

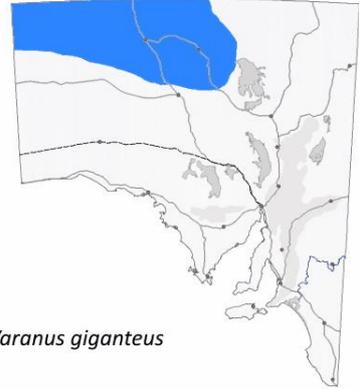
*modified from original by Department of Environment & Water.



Varanus brevicauda



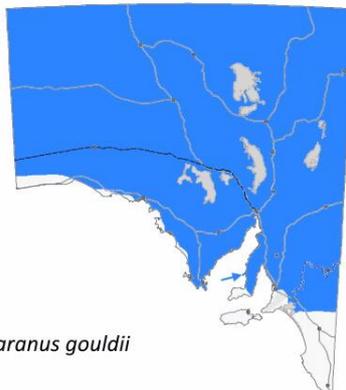
Varanus eremius



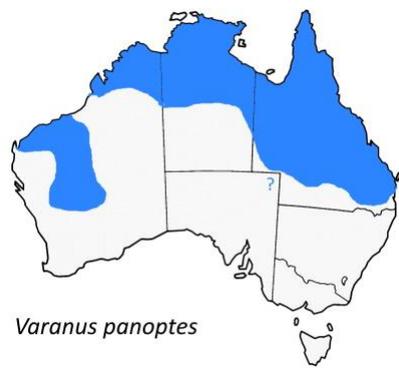
Varanus giganteus



Varanus gilleni



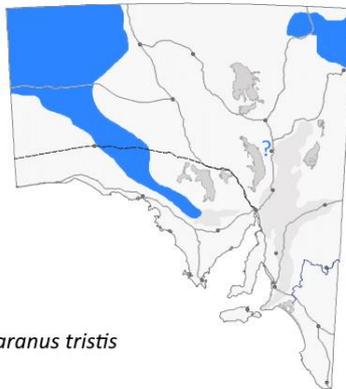
Varanus gouldii



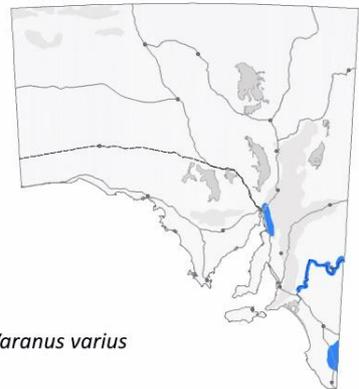
Varanus panoptes



Varanus rosenbergi



Varanus tristis



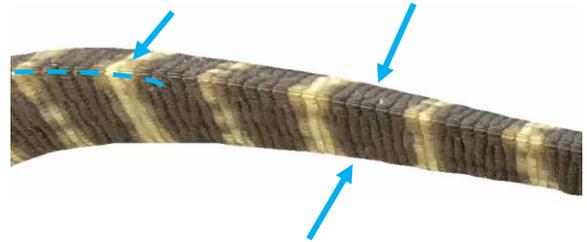
Varanus varius

Key to the Goannas of South Australia
Family Varanidae (containing only one genus: *Varanus*)

- 1. a. Tail round in cross section throughout its length; tail scales larger than body scales and may be rough or projecting **2**
- b. Tail flattened from side to side, at least in its posterior two-thirds, with a distinct dorsal keel; scales of the tail similar to those on the body **5**



V. tristis



V. gouldii

1a. Tail sides not flattened; scales relatively large and rough

1b. Tail sides flattened; a single keeled scale row along midline

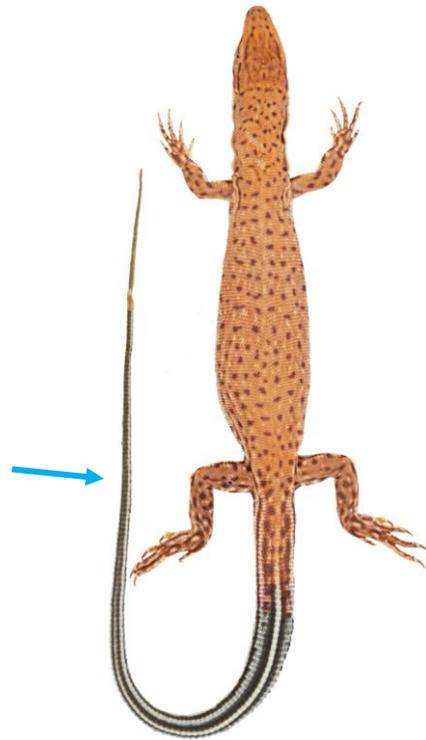
- 2. a. Tail shorter than head and body
- b. Tail longer than head and body. **3**

V. breviceuda
 Short-tailed Pygmy Goanna



V. breviceuda

2a. Short, rather spiny tail



V. eremius

2b. Long, slender tail

- 3. a. Colour and pattern of tail (pale grey with strong longitudinal cream stripes) sharply different to that of body (uniformly sandy orange with scattered dark spots) **V. eremius**
Pygmy Desert Goanna
- b. Colour and pattern of tail not sharply different from that of the body **4**



V. eremius

3a. Striped grey tail, spotted orange body

- 4. a. Dorsal colour predominantly light grey; back and base of tail with well separated irregular dark brown crossbars **V. gilleni**
Pygmy Mulga Goanna
- b. Dorsal colour reddish to yellowish brown to black, back pattern (when present) cross rows of elliptical, sandy spots, each with a dark centre; head, shoulders and much of the tail usually darker, or even solidly black (dark pigment absent in some populations from the north-west ranges) **V. tristis**
Black-headed Goanna



V. gilleni (photo: A. Fenner)

4a. Grey with darker cross-bands



V. tristis

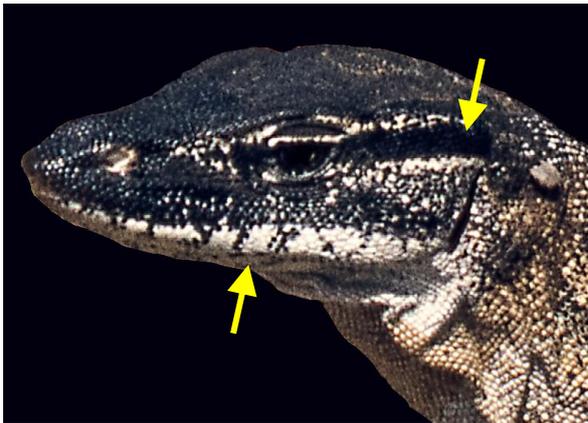
4b. Black head-and-tail colour pattern



V. tristis

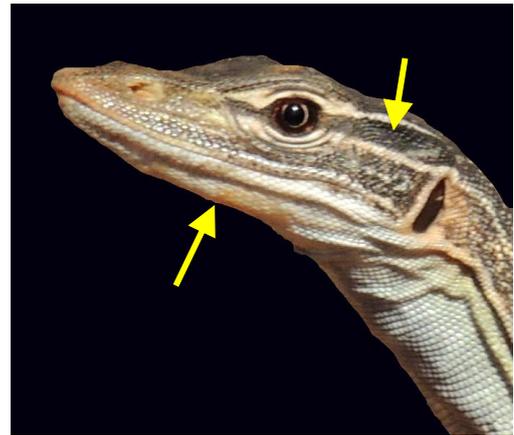
4b. Pale colour pattern

5. a. Lower jaw and throat plain whitish or weakly speckled; a dark stripe edged above and below by pale outlines runs from the eye to the top of the ear 6
- b. No dark stripe edged above and below by pale outlines from eye to ear; throat with distinctive pattern, either strong dark cross bands or a black network pattern 8

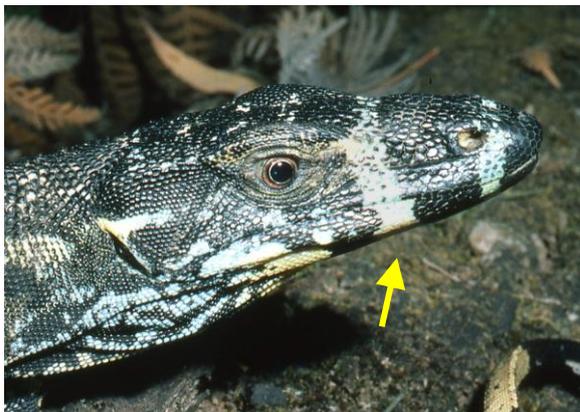


V. rosenbergi

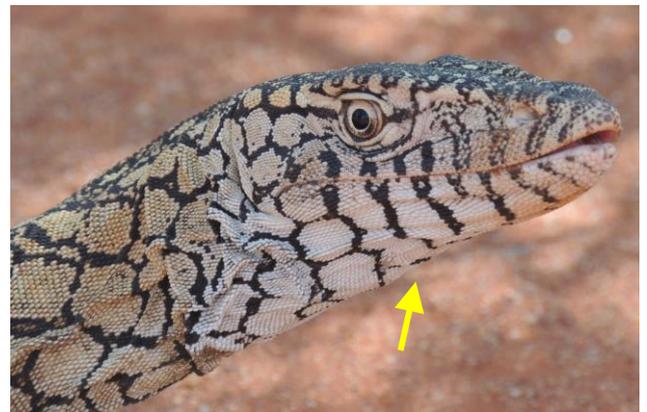
5a. Pale throat with little or no pattern; dark stripe from eye to ear



V. gouldii



V. varius



V. giganteus

5b. Throat with strong banded or network pattern

- 6. a. Overall blackish grey; pattern on neck and back includes broad dark grey cross-bands (continuing right across the underside of the belly); banding on tail extends to the tip in adults **V. rosenbergi**
Heath Goanna
- b. Overall orange-brown; neck with pale lateral longitudinal stripes; body brown to orange with cross rows of yellow spots or black and yellow rosettes; terminal part of the tail yellow **7**



V. rosenbergi

6a. Dark bands across the neck



V. gouldii

6b. Pale stripes along the neck

- 7. a. Terminal part of tail uniformly yellow; rest of tail brown with numerous narrow yellow bands **V. gouldii**
Sand Goanna
- b. Terminal part of tail pale yellow with darker markings; rest of tail sandy brown with cross-rows of small circular spots, alternately yellow and black. **V. panoptes***
Yellow-spotted Goanna

**Varanus panoptes* has not yet been recorded in South Australia but it occurs close to the north-eastern border around Birdsville in SW Queensland, and its habitat appears to continue into South Australia.



V. gouldii

7a. Tail striped, terminal part plain yellow



V. panoptes (J. de Jong)

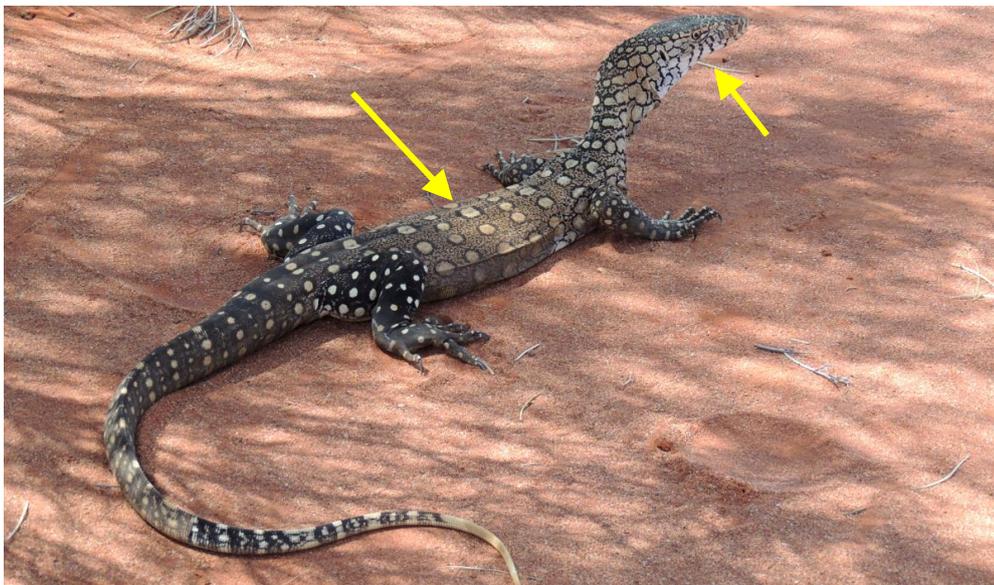
7b. Tail spotted, terminal part yellowish with darker markings

- 8. a. General colour blackish with numerous small yellowish and sometimes light blue speckles that outline broad dark cross-bands which frequently continue across throat and chin area and on to the belly; tail with irregular broad and narrow pale bands **V. varius**
Lace Goanna
- b. Back brown, with very large cream black-edged spots which are arranged in cross-rows; neck and throat white with a pattern of black lines forming a coarse network **V. giganteus**
Perentie



V. varius

- 8a. Black and yellow, with broad and narrow light tail bands; throat with dark cross-bands



V. giganteus

- 8b. Large black-edged pale yellow spots; throat with black network pattern