

Easy Reference Sheet

Caring for Lizards

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There are over 400 species of reptiles found in Queensland. South-east Queensland is home to many species of skinks, dragons, geckos and monitors.

Do I need a Permit to care for lizards?

Yes. You will need a REHABILITATION PERMIT to care for lizards.

A Rehabilitation Permit can be obtained from a licensed wildlife care group such as Wildcare.

Remember all Australian native wildlife is protected in Queensland. You cannot keep them without an appropriate Permit.

Do I have to do any training to care for lizards?

Yes. Lizards have specialised dietary and housing needs. They come into care due to illness and injury. You must have a good understanding of their anatomy and biology, be able to learn to recognise signs of injury and illness, as well as gain confidence in providing emergency care for them.

In Wildcare, you will need to complete the following training workshops in order to care for lizards:

- Orientation – compulsory for all members
- Rescue and First Aid for Wildlife (Basic) – compulsory for all members
- Lizards (Basic)

Is caring for lizards difficult?

Caring for common species of lizards, such as skinks and dragons, is a good place to start as a wildlife rehabilitator if you are interested in reptiles. Most common species are fairly hardy and suitable for new carers. However, like all of our native wildlife, they do have specialised requirements.

Remember:

- Lizards are ectothermic so they have **specific heating and lighting requirements** – you need to be able to provide this.
- They are **quiet** – they are suitable for people in units or high-density residential areas where noise needs to be kept to a minimum.
- One of their greatest **predators** is domestic pets – they cannot be housed near domestic dogs or cats but because they are housed in specially-built reptile enclosures, they can easily be kept in a separate room away from domestic animals.
- Lizards require **feeding every 1 to 2 days** so are suitable if you cannot take animals to work and do not wish to feed animals through the night.
- Lizards are generally **slow to heal** so may require longer time in care than mammals or birds with similar injuries.
- If you have captive/pet reptiles, you need to ensure that they are kept separate from any wild reptiles in order to eliminate the spread of disease to wild populations and also to protect your own pets.

Once you have been caring for common species of lizards for a while, you may want to progress to caring for more specialised species such as snakes or lace monitors.

Remember, we raise to RELEASE!

We must care for wildlife in a way that ensures their survival once returned to the wild.

What equipment do I need to care for lizards?

Lizards need to be housed and cared for during rehabilitation to prevent further injury, prevent escape, minimise stress and to allow them to display their natural behaviour.

A few things we must consider when housing lizards include:

- Providing an appropriate heat source and access to UVB light is paramount in the successful rehabilitation of all reptile species.
- Most commercially made reptile enclosures are suitable for housing most common species of lizards.
- Lizards have a varied natural diet and depending the species, will include food such as snails and insects as well as a good variety of vegetables and fruit.
- During the final stages of rehabilitation, long-term patients will require access to an outdoor enclosure to enable them to re-develop their muscle tone. Some wildlife volunteers specialise in this final stage of rehabilitation.
- All enclosures must be suitable to the species of lizard being housed and must include suitable natural branches and other fixtures (such as water dishes for water dragons) to imitate as closely as possible their natural habitat.

Below is a brief overview of some of the equipment that lizards require. The Wildcare reptile training workshop and manual covers their requirements in more detail.

Rescue Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good quality deep plastic storage tub with a secure clip-on lid in a variety of sizes. • Clean, second-hand towels to line transport carrier. • Quantity of clean pillowcases for transporting.
Adult Lizards <i>Critical Care Stage</i> <i>Intermediate Care Stage</i> <i>Pre-Release and Final Rehabilitation Stage</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose-built reptile enclosure with UVB light and appropriate heat lamp • Shallow ceramic bowls for water and food • Size of enclosures will depend on the species of lizard but will range from 0.6m L x 0.4m W x 0.5m H to 1.2m L x 1.0m W x 0.6m H • As above • Size of enclosures will depend on the species of lizard but will range from 0.9m L x 0.4m W x 0.5m H to 1.8m L x 1.0m W x 0.6m H • Fittings will depend upon the species and are outlined in the Wildcare reptile training course and manual • Large outdoor enclosure that must include adequate amount of direct sun along with some areas where access to shade is possible • Size will vary depending upon species but will range in size up to 4.0m L x 3.0m W x 2.0m H • Enclosure must include a variety of natural branches and substrate to allow for display of natural behavior. • Large water container suitable to species.

Critical Care Stage – designed to reduce an animal’s level of physical activity for a short period of time and to provide easy access for monitoring, treatment and feeding.

Intermediate Care Stage – allows sufficient space for some physical activity while enabling the animal to be easily caught for monitoring and treatment.

Pre-Release/Final Rehabilitation Stage – allows an animal to regain better physical condition, display natural behaviour, acclimatise to normal weather conditions and reduce human contact.

The measurements for enclosures listed above are sourced from the *Code of Practice – Care of Sick, Injured and Orphaned Protected Animals in Queensland* (EHP). In some circumstances, Wildcare’s housing requirements exceed the CoP suggestions.