



Striped Legless Lizard

Delma impar

Vulnerable

The overall conservation objective of the Action Plan is to maintain in the long term, viable, wild populations of the Striped Legless Lizard (SLL) as a component of the indigenous biological resources of the ACT and as a contribution to regional and national conservation of the species. This includes the need to maintain natural evolutionary processes.

Specific objectives of the Action Plan are to:

- Conserve large and medium sized populations in the ACT.
- Manage the species and its habitat to maintain potential for evolutionary development in the wild.
- Enhance the long-term viability of populations through management of adjacent grassland to increase habitat area and connect populations.

Population Trend (2017–22): Declining

There is concern for the population viability at some sites protected and/or managed for this species. In the ACT, the species is known to occur over about 1,800 ha in four disconnected grassland areas.

Figure 1 shows variable but declining patterns of occupancy. Average grass heights were well below the species preference of 10-20 cm in 2017–19 due to below average rainfall and increased grazing pressures. Numbers increased with above average rainfall received in the following years but continued to fluctuate.

Extreme weather conditions between 2020–22, including prolonged rainfall due to three successive La Nina events, made it very difficult to monitor populations and manage habitat appropriately.

Key conservation actions to support the species have included:

- Establishment of Budjan Galindji and Nadjung Mada Grasslands Reserves (in response to development but has a net conservation gain for the species).
- Translocations of specimens from development sites to nature reserves.
- Population monitoring communicated directly to land managers for management purposes.

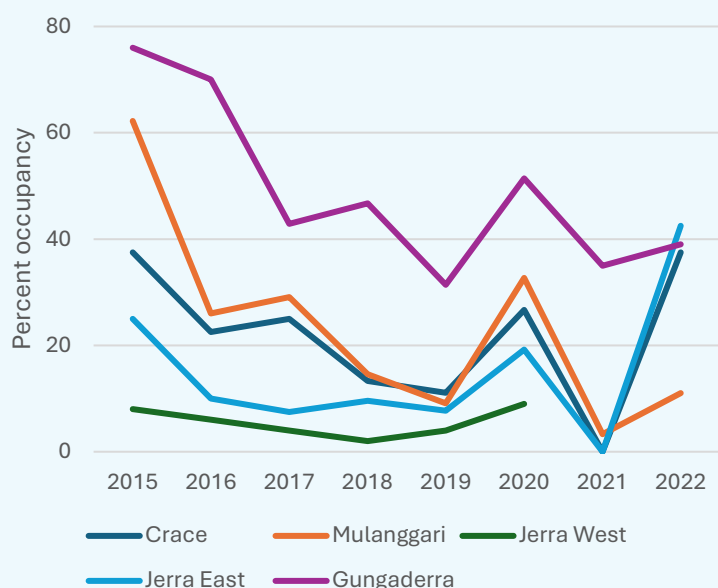


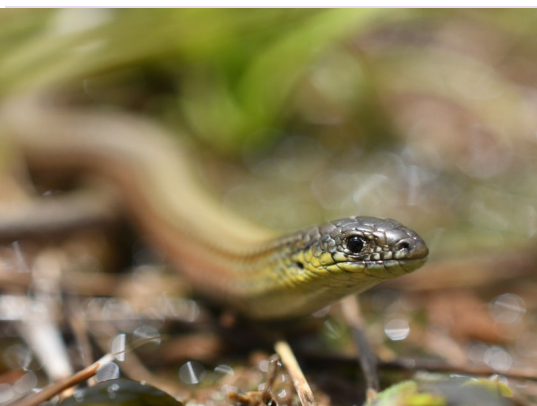
Figure 1: Percent occupancy at grids in five long-term CNP monitoring sites.

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Action Indicators	Progress (2017–22)
Protection	
All large populations protected by appropriate formal measures.	Partially achieved - ongoing
All sites with medium-sized populations are protected by appropriate measures from unintended impacts.	Partially achieved - ongoing
All sites with small populations are protected by appropriate measures from unintended impacts, where sites have broader conservation value.	Partially achieved - ongoing
Monitoring and Habitat Management	
Trends in abundance are known for representative sites, management actions recorded.	Achieved
Habitat is managed appropriately. Potential threats (e.g., weeds) are avoided or managed. Populations are apparently stable or increasing (taking into account probable seasonal/annual effects on abundance fluctuations).	Partially achieved Populations are not stable or increasing
Grassland adjacent to or linking habitat is managed to improve suitability for the species. If suitable habitat exists, research and trials have been undertaken to establish new populations.	Partially achieved - ongoing
Research	
Research undertaken and reported, and where appropriate applied to the conservation management of the species.	Mostly achieved - ongoing
Community Engagement	
Engagement and awareness activities undertaken and reported.	Achieved

Note: this is a summary of progress for action indicators. For the full Effectiveness Review Report, please contact OfficeofNatureConservation@act.gov.au.



Outcome:
Reduced average grass heights across the board and the continued decline in SLL abundance has strong implications for the current and ongoing persistence for this species at survey sites. Further monitoring and investigation is required to determine the causes of the decline; however, population fluctuations are clearly correlated with biomass levels. The primary way SLL populations are managed in the ACT is through the management of the species grassland habitat.

What’s next for the Striped Legless Lizard?

- Investigate low densities, decline, and/or absence of SLL across monitoring sites, determine appropriate conservation management measures and enact appropriate site-specific management interventions.
- Review herbage mass guidelines to inform management under current extreme weather conditions.
- Improve monitoring and undertake research: focus on population fluctuations, seasonal home ranges, optimal habitat requirements and habitat management techniques, impacts of fires, barriers and predation.