

Ctenotus robustus

C.Lane 2006

As with all *Ctenotus* species *robusta* has 5 fingers/toes on each limb, an easily seen ear opening, shiny skin, is diurnal, sun loving and very quick.

Identification and Distribution

Large, easily recognised (see photos) *Ctenotus robustus* is the only skink of its size on Magnetic Island and has very distinctive striped patterning. It has a wide distribution, nationally found in all mainland states, in mostly dry open woodland, arid and coastal vegetation areas. *C. robustus* is probably distributed all over Magnetic Island. It is definitely in all the bay areas and at West Point and has also been noticed right up Gustav Creek and on hills bounding Horseshoe Bay and Arcadia. This skink has a known association with granite areas. The largest specimens have been found in W.A at 125mm snout to vent length, but here, the largest this author has observed are about 100mm (doesn't include tail).

Breeding

It is an egg-laying or oviparous skink.

Habitat and Behaviour

This lizard will be found in areas outside the vine thickets although it will colonise paths. It prefers open areas that are warm and light. It can be seen early to mid morning sunning itself on rocks etc. until its body temperature rises to optimum, then it will remain out of the sun in the midday heat in summer. It is quick to run off unless it thinks you can't see it and then it will remain completely still, waiting for you to walk on. It will hide in leaf litter or under rocks and logs for example and will utilise burrows for safety if the soil is soft. Individuals can be repeatedly seen in the same spots, and this species is believed to have a territory or home area which it seldom leaves. They have the ability to vocalise, often uttering a squeak when hand captured. If frightened it may dive into available water and if this happens its respiration has the ability to slow accordingly.

Diet

Primarily an insectivore with a wide flexible dietary range, its food can include grasshoppers beetles etc. Like all skinks it will stalk its food. It has been known to also eat other lizards and occasionally seeds.

Predators

Known predators include cats and the Common Death Adder *Acanthophis antarcticus*

both of which exist on Magnetic Island, other reptiles and Kookaburras, Butcher birds etc would also be possibilities.

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