

## Dragons in Brisbane

## Fact Sheet



Frilled Lizard. Image: QM.

Form, colour and pattern of any animal have survival value. Bizarre form and gaudy colours can be just as important as smooth, inconspicuous lines and dull tones. It pays to advertise as well as conceal! Dragon lizards advertise and disguise more than most reptiles. In spring, normally drab-coloured male Water Dragons become the proud displayers of bright red throats and bellies. Such displays attract mates and advertise status to potential rivals. By contrast, Southern Angle-headed Dragons can be difficult to see because they match the colours of the rainforest, their outline is disrupted by spines, and they can sit motionless for hours.

Six species of dragons have been found in the greater Brisbane area. All are harmless.

**The Tommy Round-head** (*Diporiphora australis*) lives in wooded areas in the outer suburbs of Brisbane. It feeds on insects.



Tommy Round-head. Image: Bruce Cowell, QM.

**The Nobbi Dragon** (*Amphibolurus nobbi*) is similar in appearance to the Tommy Round-head, but has a small crest of spines down the back. During the breeding season, around spring, male Nobbi Dragons develop a mauve flush on the base of the tail. They are found mainly in hilly, rocky areas near Mt Coot-tha and Rochedale.



Nobbi Dragon. Image: Steve Wilson.

**The Bearded Dragon** (*Pogona barbata*) is common in Brisbane. This species has a dull grey, spiny skin and a spiny pouch under the throat. When threatened, the bearded dragon can look fierce and increase its apparent size by inflating the throat pouch and displaying a bright yellow mouth-lining. Bearded Dragons eat a variety of insect and plants, including grasshoppers, moths, flies, dandelion flowers and clover.



Bearded Dragon. Image: QM.

**The Water Dragon (*Physignathus lesueurii*)** occurs mainly near creeks and rivers. It is abundant in Brisbane. Large colonies live along the banks of the Brisbane River, the Roma Street Parklands, and the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens. Water dragons feed on fruits, flowers and insects.



Water Dragon. Image: QM, Jeff Wright.

**The Southern Angle-headed Dragon (*Hypsilurus spinipes*)** is found only in rainforests and moist eucalypt forests. It once occurred in forests in the Mitchelton–Enoggera area and is still found on Mt Glorious.

**The Frilled Lizard (*Chlamydosaurus kingii*)** was once common in and near Brisbane but has been regarded as locally rare for many years. Recent records suggest it still occurs on Bribie Island, Greenbank, Browns Plains and Loganlea. 'Frillys' prey on insects.

#### Further Information

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