

Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

Arnhem Phasmid Gecko

Strophurus horneri

Conservation status

Australia: Vulnerable

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Northern Territory: Vulnerable

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976

Description

The Arnhem Phasmid Gecko is a small and slender gecko with a prehensile tail and thin limbs. The maximum recorded snout-vent length is 44 mm¹. The typical colour of an Arnhem Phasmid Gecko comprises alternating yellow and brown longitudinal stripes, though uniform grey populations also occur in the south of the species' range¹.

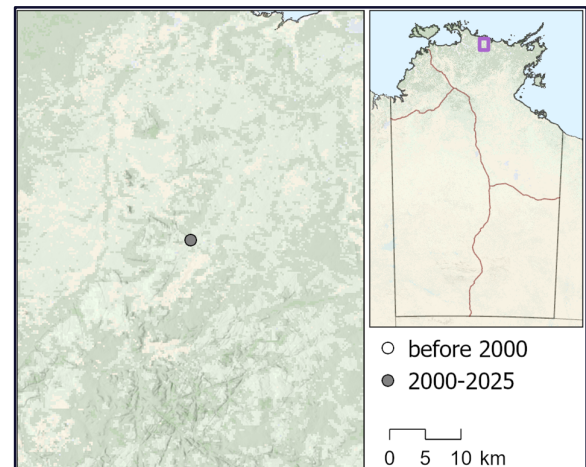
Distribution

The Arnhem Phasmid Gecko is restricted to rugged areas of the Arnhem Plateau, Northern Territory (NT). The species has been recorded from seven sites, mostly on the western edge of the plateau¹.

NT conservation reserves where reported: Kakadu National Park, Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area.

Ecology and life-history

This species is highly specialised, living in mature spinifex grass hummocks in habitat that has not burnt for more than 3–5 years¹. This habitat type occurs patchily across the dissected sandstone hills and escarpments of the Arhem Plateau.



Known localities of the Arnhem Phasmid Gecko in the NT (nrmaps.nt.gov.au)

Other aspects of the species' ecology and life-history are poorly known.

Threatening processes

The primary threat to the Arnhem Phasmid Gecko is fire regimes that reduce the availability of mature spinifex hummocks across its distribution¹. While rugged terrain likely protects small pockets of habitat from wildfire across the Arnhem Plateau, the overall extent of long-unburnt vegetation has declined in recent decades.

Conservation objectives and management

The key management priority for the Arnhem Phasmid Gecko is strategic prescribed burning aimed at: i) reducing the extent and severity of wildfires, and ii) increasing the area of long-unburnt spinifex vegetation across the Arnhem Plateau.

References

¹ Mulder, J., Oliver, P.M., Jolly, C.J., 2022. Intraspecific colour pattern variation and genetic diversity in a spinifex specialist gecko (Diplodactylidae: *Strophurus*) from the Arnhem Plateau, Northern Territory, Australia. *Herpetology Notes* 15, 853–862.