



## Northern Collared Delma *Delma tincta*

**What do they look like?** Small, dull brown, legless lizards that look like snakes. They are not poisonous. They reach about 40 cm long. The head may be dark with pale bands or collars, or plain like the body. They have a fleshy tongue, rather than forked, and ear openings in the side of the head. The tail is long – about three-quarters of the animal's length. They can 'drop' the tail and regrow it, an escape strategy used by many lizards. They may make a squeaking noise when handled.

**Where do they live?** Delmas live in forests and woodlands that have a continuous grassy ground layer of Kangaroo Grass, Black Speargrass and Spinifex. They may live in introduced pastures (e.g. Indian Couch) and rocky areas with sparse cover. They seem to avoid areas heavily invaded by weeds.

**What do they need to live, eat and breed?** Northern Collared Delmas eat small invertebrates. They can be active day and night, frequently taking refuge under rocks and logs. They lay two eggs at a time, which they deposit in loose soil under rocks and logs, or in deep soil cracks or ant nests.

**When might I see (or hear) them?** They are very secretive. If you do see them during the day, you will rarely get more than a fleeting glimpse. In open areas, they usually leap around as they try to flee.

**What management actions affect this species?** Delmas require thick ground cover and litter for feeding and protection from predators such as kookaburras. Spell country to maintain vigorous native pastures and ground cover. If fire is used, patch burning allows some retention of leaf litter. Manage introduced weeds. Vegetation clearing, wildfire, overgrazing and urban development are all significant problems for delmas.

**How do they benefit the land I manage?** Delmas help to regulate insect populations and prevent plagues of species that may affect grass health. They help in nutrient cycling, returning insect nutrients to the soil. In combination with the thousands of small insectivorous reptiles on any one property, delmas make an important contribution to land condition.

**Similar species:** Striped-tailed Delma (*Delma labialis*), is much larger and lives in a few coastal areas.

