



Rainbow Skink *Carlia munda*

What do they look like? Small, brown lizards usually seen running between cover. They may stop and wave their tail when approached. There are many species of Rainbow Skinks, distinguished from other lizards because they have four fingers and five toes.

Where do they live? Rainbow Skinks are generalists. They are able to live in many different habitat types, but mostly prefer open, grassy woodlands with moderate ground cover. Leafy river flats are especially favoured.

What do they need to live, eat and breed? Rainbow Skinks feed on small invertebrates (e.g. insects and spiders). They shelter and feed in leaf litter, occasionally emerging to feed and bask on open ground. They lay their eggs under more substantial cover, such as rocks and logs. Males seem to maintain a territory that they will defend from other males, at least in breeding season.

When might I see (or hear) them? Warm sun patches on the ground on cool mornings are the best time and place to see them. They can be very approachable, as getting warm is a high priority. Eggs may be disturbed if fallen logs are moved.

What management actions affect this species? Rainbow Skinks require moderate ground cover, particularly leaf litter. Spell country to maintain vigorous native pastures and ground cover. If fire is used, patch burning allows some retention of leaf litter. Skinks avoid Rubber Vine infestations, hence controlling this weed will help them. Control feral and household cats as skinks are a favourite food for cats.

How do they benefit the land I manage? Rainbow Skinks are a vital part of healthy food chains. They are the most important food source for many small snakes and are also taken by a range of other animals such as Brown Falcons, Australian Kestrels, dunnarts and quolls (native marsupial cats). In turn, they are part of a group of species that eat large numbers of small invertebrates (e.g. grasshoppers) that eat pasture grasses and crops.

Similar species: Many species of Rainbow Skink occur in this part of Queensland including *Carlia vivax*, *C. pectoralis*, *C. jarnoldae*, *C. mundivensis*, *C. foliorum* and *C. schmeltzii*.

