

Australian Lizard



Description

Lizards are a widespread group of squamate reptiles, with over 7,000 species, ranging across all continents except Antarctica, as well as most oceanic island chains. The group is paraphyletic since it excludes the snakes and Amphisbaenia although some lizards are more closely related to these two excluded groups than they are to other lizards. Lizards range in size from chameleons and geckos a few centimeters long to the 3-meter-long Komodo dragon.

Most lizards are quadrupedal, running with a strong side-to-side motion. Some lineages (known as "legless lizards"), have secondarily lost their legs, and have long snake-like bodies. Some such as the forest-dwelling *Draco* lizards are able to glide. They are often territorial, the males fighting off other males and signalling, often with bright colours, to attract mates and to intimidate rivals. Lizards are mainly carnivorous, often being sit-and-wait predators; many smaller species eat insects, while the Komodo eats mammals as big as water buffalo.