

Native animal information sheet



Keeping native animals

Keeping any animal requires additional responsibility and work. It is essential that the teacher responsible for the animal has sufficient knowledge of the species to interpret its physical state and behaviour and provide it with appropriate care.

The natural diets of our native animals vary depending on the species. The types and quantities of foods they require reflect the nutritional needs of the particular species and the time of the year and the climate.

It is best, as a general rule, to try and provide native animals with the sorts of food they normally feed upon. **Do remember that live animals must not be used as**

a food source for other animals at schools. If whole animals are required as a food source, such as for reptiles, then the animal must be killed humanely before being given as food to another animal.

A native animal's willingness to feed in captivity is in part an indication of its acceptance of its environment. Animals must be familiar with, and feel secure in, the environment that they are provided with. Remember that your native animal may have been bred in captivity, but a school environment can present additional stresses for any animal.



Animal care records

It is a requirement of the Animal Research Act that schools maintain records documenting the use of animals in the school. The type of records maintained will depend on the species and use of animals. Records for native animals should include:

- dates and sources of acquisition
- licence type and number
- disposal dates and details
- feeding details
- complete breeding records
- dates and types of any husbandry practices carried out
- any accident, illness or injury and the veterinary treatment provided.



Feeding records

Always maintain detailed feeding records for native animals so that you can be sure that each individual is being fed adequately. Details can be recorded in a book or on a feed recording sheet attached to each enclosure, allowing identification of any unfavourable trends in feeding behaviour. The information recorded should include:

- feeding dates
- food offered
- food accepted
- date of any significant events, e.g. skin-sloughing, any veterinary treatments.

Suggested resources

Green, D. (2000) *Keeping long-necked turtles*. Australian Reptile Keeper Publications, Bendigo.

Green, D. (2000) *Keeping short-necked turtles*. Australian Reptile Keeper Publications, Bendigo.

Green, D. (2001) *Keeping shingleback lizards*. Australian Reptile Keeper Publications, Bendigo.

Green, D. and Larson, T. (2001) *Keeping bearded dragons*. Australian Reptile Keeper Publications, Bendigo.

Turner, G. (2001) *Keeping blue-tongue lizards*. Australian Reptile Keeper Publications, Bendigo.

Kortlang, S. and Green, D. (2001) *Keeping carpet pythons*. Australian Reptile Keeper Publications, Bendigo.

Weigel, J. (2000) *Care of Australian Reptiles in Captivity*. Reptile Keepers Association, Gosford.

Many of these books are available online at www.herpbooks.com.au.

Further information

The **Animals in schools** website www.schools.nsw.edu.au/animalsinschools provides species notes for *Australian native animals* and *Frogs and toads* in *Species information*.

Sally Bannerman
Schools Animal Welfare Officer
sally.bannerman@det.nsw.edu.au
Tel: 02 9886 7426

