

Perentie Goanna

King of the Australian lizards

- Australia's largest lizard, measuring 2.5 metres long, with a strong muscular body, claws, and a long tail that can be used as a whip.
- They camouflage their mottled skin against rocky outcrops in the environment so they can hide from predators.
- More active at dusk and dawn, which are the cooler parts of the day. They could overheat in the middle of the day as temperatures can reach 45 degrees.
- They evolved to have thick, waterproof skin, and scales to prevent water loss.
- To stay hydrated when water can't be found, goannas can extract fluids from the animals they eat, such as small mammals. Many of these animals are made up of around 70 percent water, so the perentie can get a feed and hydrate itself at the same time.
- Can run at speeds of over 30 kilometres an hour.

The big loose piece of skin on the neck [called a gular] can be filled with large volumes of air, allowing them to run and breathe at the same time. This works by pushing oxygen into their lungs, allowing them to run for long periods of time.



“This isn’t your garden variety goanna: this is the perentie. They are fierce defenders of their territory, so I’ll have to stay on my toes. These aren’t the kind of animals you would want to approach in the wild.”

PHIL BRESLIN,
BUILT TO SURVIVE HOST