

Flora & Fauna Guarantee Action Statement

#17

This Action Statement was first published in 1992 and remains current. This version has been prepared for web publication. It retains the original text of the action statement, although contact information, the distribution map and the illustration may have been updated.

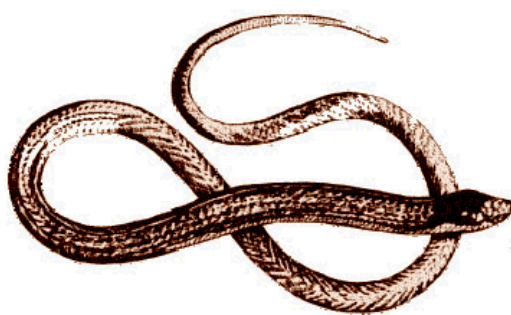
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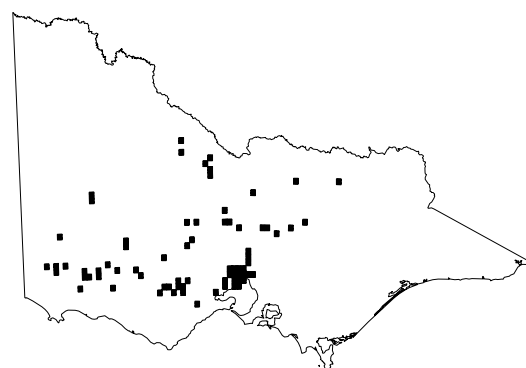
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Striped Legless Lizard *Delma impar*



Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*)



Distribution in Victoria (DSE 2002)

Description and Distribution

The Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar* Fischer 1882) resembles a snake but can be distinguished by having a proportionately longer tail hind limbs (which are reduced to two scaly flaps near the vent) and visible ear openings. This species differs from other legless lizards (family Pygopodidae) by having distinctive ear-openings and characteristic longitudinal stripes (Cogger 1986, Jenkins & Bartell 1980). Adult Striped Legless Lizards are slightly thicker than a pencil and up to 30 cm long. Their base colour is a light brown and the longitudinal stripes are darker brown.

All legless lizards are oviparous (egg-laying). The Striped Legless Lizard lays two eggs during spring-summer (Cogger 1986, Patchell & Shine 1986). They appear to be diurnal in habit, but spend most of their time out of sight in grass tussocks or cracks in the ground, or under rocks.

The distribution and abundance of the Striped Legless Lizard are poorly documented (Robertson 1987) since the

species is very rarely seen. Its distribution appears to be centered in Victoria, with isolated records from around Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory and from Bool Lagoon in South Australia.

Most recent sightings have been in near-urban areas west and north of Melbourne, and near Cressy in the Western District. The species is known to have occurred recently in grasslands around Portland, Hamilton, Creswick and to the north of Horsham, but surveys have not yet been undertaken in these areas.

Early reports indicate that it was also recorded from the Yea area in grassy woodland. The paucity of records outside the greater Melbourne area may reflect a low search effort rather than the absence or rarity of the species there (Coulson 1990).

While it has been reported that the Striped Legless Lizard inhabits woodlands as well as grasslands (Jenkins & Bartell 1980), recent surveys indicate that it is generally found in perennial lowland tussock grasslands with year-round cover (Coulson 1990).

Conservation Status

Current Status

ANZECC (1991) Vulnerable in Australia

The Striped Legless Lizard has been listed as a threatened taxon on Schedule 2 of the Flora and fauna Guarantee Act 1988.

Reasons for Conservation Status

There is evidence that the Striped Legless Lizard is rare, is in a demonstrable state of decline as its native grassland habitat has declined, and is significantly prone to future threats, especially vegetation clearance and urban expansion (Scientific Advisory Committee 1991a). It is estimated that 95% of Victoria's native lowland grasslands have been grossly altered since European settlement (Stuwe 1986). The major type of grassland which is known to contain Striped Legless Lizards is the Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland community. This community has been listed as threatened on Schedule 2 of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 since 'only about 0.16% of the original extent of the community now remains' and the decline is continuing (Scientific Advisory Committee 1991b). Habitat suitability for the Striped Legless Lizard is dependent on lack of disturbance and good tussock cover, which usually only occurs several years after fire or grazing (Coulson 1990). However, most remnant grasslands are subject to significant levels of disturbance, and to what extent they still support the Striped Legless Lizard is unknown.

Because the remaining habitat is very limited in area and is severely fragmented, Striped Legless Lizards probably occur in fairly small, isolated populations. The fact that this species probably does not venture often into areas with little vegetation cover would enhance this isolation effect and result in a poor ability to recover from disaster or to colonise new areas. In small populations these factors also contribute to a serious limitation on the exchange of genes, which can lead to decreased adaptive ability and even inbreeding in the long term.

Major Conservation Objective

The major conservation objective is to ensure that the Striped Legless Lizard can survive, flourish and maintain its potential for evolutionary development in the wild. Determining the critical habitat is a necessary step in refining the management program to achieve this objective. The interim target, however, is to maintain or establish a minimum of five areas of suitable habitat where threats to Striped Legless Lizards are removed or minimised, each area supporting a viable population of the lizards and the total population being not less than 1000 individuals. The five or more areas must be so located that the maximum genetic variation is maintained across the range of the species.

Where possible, some of these areas should be joined by corridors of suitable habitat to facilitate exchange of genes. The conservation program must also provide for catastrophic losses at one location and for translocation of

Striped Legless Lizards to unpopulated habitat should any become available in the future.

Management Issues

Ecological Issues Specific to the Taxon

This Action Statement is based on all available information about the Striped Legless Lizard, but there is an urgent need to obtain further information on the species' distribution, abundance, biology, habitat requirements (including critical habitat) and habitat availability. Much of the program involves inventory, research and monitoring work for rapid improvement of this knowledge base. The management program should be revised periodically in the light of any new information.

The key management issue is that the Striped Legless Lizard's apparent preferred habitat $\frac{3}{4}$ lowland native tussock grassland with good cover $\frac{3}{4}$ is close to becoming extinct in Victoria. In urban and near-urban areas, residential and industrial development and associated roadworks are the main causes of habitat destruction; this threat has increased markedly in recent years and is continuing. Permanent habitat damage also occurs when soil is disturbed by cultivation for cropping or pasture development. Less obvious modifications to the grassland habitat through activities such as prolonged heavy grazing or rock removal can be almost as damaging. Increasing urban growth and associated human pressures can lead to habitat degradation and disturbance by trampling, tree planting, weed invasion, unplanned fires, and increased numbers of introduced predators such as foxes and cats. Illegal activities such as taking by collectors for keeping or as food for larger reptiles can also reduce population numbers, as can killing the lizards in the mistaken belief that they are snakes. In undisturbed grassland, the main management issue is to maintain an appropriate fire regime, since this profoundly affects habitat suitability. While lowland grassland communities need 'intermittent' burning to maintain plant diversity (McDougall 1987, Lunt 1990), the direct effect of fire on individual lizards and the longer-term implications of habitat modification on lizard populations are unknown. Striped Legless Lizards have died in fires, particularly in 'cool season' spring burns when soil moisture is high and cracks in the soil are closed, making it difficult for animals to find refuge from fire (Coulson 1990).

To minimise Striped Legless Lizard mortality, it is probably best to undertake management burning in autumn while the soil is cracked and all young will be mobile. Burning should be carried out in a patchwork mosaic with each area burnt at a frequency least five years to allow good tussock cover to develop.

In some situations, it may be better to use light grazing, particularly if timing and intensity are managed to minimise weed invasion yet retain flora diversity.

The fragmentation of populations is a serious issue for this species since Striped Legless Lizards are unlikely to colonise new areas or to exchange genetic material between disjunct populations where open areas act as a barrier to movement. Secure but small areas of remnant grassland, while of high botanical significance, are probably inadequate for conserving

Striped Legless Lizard populations in the long term. To meet the conservation objective for this species, adequate areas need to be managed for grassland and Striped Legless Lizard conservation.

Initial Population Viability Assessment (PVA) of this species suggested that a population of 300 individuals may be viable provided that general mortality and catastrophe (especially fire) mortality rates are low. Current information suggests that Derrimut Grassland Reserve (with approximately 140 ha of suitable habitat) should support such a population.

At the time of writing there were only three conservation reserves containing suitable grassland habitat, and only one of these is known to contain Striped Legless Lizards. This is the 154 ha Derrimut Grassland Reserve which Meredith et al. (1989) considered would be critical habitat for the Striped Legless Lizard. There are 52 ha in Laverton North Grassland Reserve which until the late 1970s had Striped Legless Lizards but may not support a population now. The 450 ha Cobra-Killuc State Wildlife Reserve contains significant western plains grassland but Striped Legless Lizards have not yet been recorded here.

Other areas of native grassland in public ownership which are also managed for conservation purposes include the Lake Goldsmith Reserve and the Hamilton Community Parklands. Both sites may be suitable for reestablishing the Striped Legless Lizard.

Although these reserves are managed for native grassland conservation, they may not be adequate for the long-term conservation of the Striped Legless Lizard because of constraints set by having to manage the reserves for other fauna and flora, and by external factors such as incompatible adjacent land uses.

In order to achieve the major conservation objective of having five areas supporting viable populations, a key issue is that additional areas of suitable habitat (unreserved public and/or private land) will need to be managed in a way that ensures the long-term survival of the Striped Legless Lizard.

Wider Conservation Issues

Conservation of the Striped Legless Lizard requires the retention of native grassland habitat, and this is likely to be beneficial for most other indigenous grassland flora and fauna and the ecological community as a whole. However, the potential effects of the required fire regime on other biota, particularly the vegetation, are not well understood. For example, to maintain plant diversity a more frequent burning pattern than that proposed for Striped Legless Lizard conservation may be required depending on species present and the weediness of the area. Timing is also an issue: burning the grasslands in summer-autumn (when soil cracks provide refuge for Striped Legless Lizards) rather than in spring could be generally disadvantageous if there is increased disturbance to the grasslands from the extra vehicles, people and firebreaks needed in times of high fire danger; alternatively, it could be advantageous, since vehicles have much less impact on drier soil than on wet soil.

Therefore, an ecological, rather than individual species, approach to managing remnant lowland grasslands will be required to balance all conservation benefits.

Degradation and disturbance within remnant grasslands, including the existing Derrimut and Laverton North Grassland Reserves, is increasing. Active management of these sites has been limited. The serious problem of weed infestation, particularly the aggressive invasion by the introduced Chilean Needle-grass *Nassella* (previously *Stipa*) *neesiana*, needs immediate attention if the values of these grasslands are to be preserved. As further industrial and residential development surrounds remnant grasslands, drainage and water quality issues will also require further attention.

Trees have been planted in native grasslands now managed for conservation. Not only are trees exotic in what were extensive treeless open plains, but soil disturbance associated with planting introduces weeds and alters nutrient levels and soil moisture content. There may be other negative effects, such as the increase in habitat for raptors, ravens and other birds that may prey on lizards and other grassland fauna.

Social and Economic Issues

The long-term survival of the Striped Legless Lizard raises several important socio-economic issues, some of which may be difficult to address.

The main social benefit of conserving the Striped Legless Lizard is that this meets society's demand, as embodied in the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, that further extinctions be prevented. The recent establishment of a Friends of Delma group is a further indication of community desire to protect this species.

Other social benefits may accrue from its conservation, including those that flow from conserving other species and the grassland community of which they are all part.

Preservation of native grassland provides a wider range of natural habitats for recreation, tourism, education and research. Conserving grasslands in urban areas does not necessarily preclude opportunities for compatible passive recreation.

There is a social cost to ensuring the long-term survival of the Striped Legless Lizard. Additional areas of land have to be set aside and managed in specific ways to meet the conservation objective. This designated land use will restrict other activities such as intensive grazing, industrial or residential development, tree planting and some kinds of recreation. However, this social cost should be put in perspective: already more than 95% of Victoria's native tussock grasslands have been allocated to these other uses and as a result have been destroyed.

The most threatened known habitat is that close to Melbourne, mostly on sites intended for industrial or residential subdivision where property values are high. However, since there are few native grassland remnants left (DCE 1990), protecting these sites for conservation would have little impact on the total amount of land available for industrial subdivision in the western suburbs. Therefore the social costs of such a conservation program can be minimised through coordinated planning and management agreements. For example, there should be scope within the planning system for developing

mechanisms (e.g. offsets, land exchange, and rezoning) to protect the important grassland areas while minimising disadvantage to land-owners and developers. Where such mechanisms are not pursued and land purchase becomes the only option for meeting the conservation objectives, there will be a much higher economic cost. Additional sources of funding will have to be secured to ensure that the Striped Legless Lizard and the threatened community to which it belongs are not sacrificed.

On farms, Striped Legless Lizards would generally be restricted to the few remaining small and isolated patches of native grassland, not in improved pasture. Colonies are most likely to persist on unimproved areas where stocking rates have been kept low. Where important Striped Legless Lizard habitat exists on farming land, continuation of farm practices which avoid heavy grazing, rock removal, cultivation and fertiliser application are more likely to result in long-term survival of the species. Few opportunities will be lost if farmers integrate usage of these unimproved areas with overall farm management.

Landholders may like to participate in the Land For Wildlife Scheme, which should promote their beneficial practices and which may assist them with advice on other land management aspects. They may also wish to use conservation covenants to ensure that these practices are continued after they have left the property.

Of more concern is the rural subdivision of remnant areas into 'hobby farm' size blocks. The planning system should be able to provide for habitat protection with minimal social and economic costs by taking account of grassland conservation requirements in its decision-making processes.

Management Action

Previous Management Action

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act

Both the Striped Legless Lizard and its most important habitat, the Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland Community, have been listed on Schedule 2 of the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988.

Biological Research and Survey

Initial investigation into the biology and habitat requirements of the Striped Legless Lizard has been undertaken (Coulson 1990; Moro 1990; Kutt in prep.). Field surveys for the Striped Legless Lizard have begun at Derrimut Grassland Reserve, Laverton North Grassland Reserve, Sydenham Park, private land in the Werribee Corridor and in potential habitat sites within the Ballarat Region. Limited survey work on roadsides in the Cressy area of Colac Region has also been successful in locating remnant populations of the Striped Legless Lizard. An initial PVA was carried out in late 1991 (Webster et al. in prep.). Because detailed data on the Striped Legless Lizard are not yet available, parameters which generally apply to populations of reptiles in the wild were used. These

included general mortality rates as high as 50% in the first year, and a fire catastrophe mortality rate of 50% of the total population every five years. Based on an initial population of 300 at full carrying capacity, 50 simulations of the PVA predicted a 92% probability of extinction of the population over a 100-year period. Variations were run to test the effects of reducing mortality rates, and the greatest effect occurred as a result of reducing the catastrophe mortality rate. This indicated a need to ensure that the frequency and impact of catastrophes are reduced to acceptable levels, but further research and modelling work is needed to establish these levels.

Habitat Inventory

Inventories of native grasslands in various parts of Victoria have been prepared by Frood (1985), Stuwe (1986), McDougall (1987), Lunt (1987, 1988 & 1990) and DCE (1990). Consultant botanists K. McDougall and T. Barlow are currently studying remnant grassland vegetation in western Victoria under an ANPWS grant. However, these reports have concentrated on botanical attributes.

Habitat Conservation

Under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, Derrimut Grassland Reserve was made a permanent reserve in 1989, Laverton North Grassland Reserve was made a temporary reserve in 1983 and the adjacent area previously leased by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology was made a temporary reserve on 25 June 1991.

The panel hearing the Western Ring Road case recognised the extremely high values of the grassland abutting Derrimut Grassland Reserve and recommended that it be protected. This resulted in VicRoads agreeing to add an additional 100 m buffer area of highly significant Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland Community to the Derrimut Grassland Reserve. Other areas of potential habitat are being managed in ways compatible with the conservation of the Striped Legless Lizard. These include Cobra-Killuc Reserve, Lake Goldsmith State Game Reserve, Mortlake Common, Hamilton Community Parklands, Gellibrand Hill Park and railway reserves under the V/Line Vegetation Management Agreement.

The Department of Conservation and Environment has published an Action Plan for Remnant Native Grasslands and Grassy Woodlands of the Melbourne area (DCE 1990), and is preparing a draft Conservation Program for Native Grasslands and Grassy Woodlands in Victoria (DCE in prep.).

Habitat Management

A Management Plan for Cobra-Killuc State Wildlife Reserve has been prepared (Hastings 1983), although it may need updating to incorporate actions included in this Action Statement.

Work has started on Draft Management Plans for the Derrimut Grassland Reserve and St. Albans Railway Reserves and on a series of 'Grassland Management Guidelines': operational guidelines for managers of sites containing grassland. Long-term grassland restoration programs have begun at Organ Pipes National Park, Mooramong Nature Reserve near Skipton, Cobra-Killuc Reserve and Mortlake Common. The aim of these programs is to restore these areas as representative

samples of basalt plains flora and fauna assemblages. In the case of Mooramong and Cobra-Killuc, any reintroduction program would need to be integrated with the Eastern Barred Bandicoot recovery plan.

Ecological burning and weed control activities have been undertaken at both Derrimut and Laverton North Grassland Reserves and at Cobra-Killuc Reserve consistent with the area's Management Plan (Hastings 1983).

Captive Colony and Translocation

The Melbourne Zoo has agreed to establish a rescue and holding centre for Striped Legless Lizards that have been removed from sites where their habitat is about to be destroyed by development. At present, three Striped Legless Lizards including one young are being held at the Zoo, but none have been returned to the wild.

Striped Legless Lizard Working Group

The Striped Legless Lizard Working Group was established in December 1990 to co-ordinate state-wide action on the conservation of this species. The Group has representatives from relevant Government, university, professional and community organisations. Specifically, this group will ensure that this Action Statement is implemented in an integrated, cost-effective and coordinated way and that its targets are met.

Interpretation and Community Awareness

A pamphlet on the Striped Legless Lizard was published by DCE as part of the threatened species series in June 1991. A poster on Grasslands in Victoria with the Striped Legless Lizard featured prominently was published by DCE in June 1991.

In mid-1991 a 'Friends of Delma' community group was established under the auspices of the Victorian National Parks Association.

Intended Management Action

Note that the effectiveness of this Striped Legless Lizard conservation program will be maximised, while the costs are minimised, if it is integrated with management of the grassland and grassy woodland communities of which it is a part. The same applies to other species which rely on grasslands and/or grassy woodlands. A logical approach will be to prepare the Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland Community Action Statement and integrate the conservation requirements of component species which are rare or threatened.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act

- Undertake a Critical Habitat Determination for the Striped Legless Lizard.
- Develop a policy on the deliberate and indirect taking of protected flora in Striped Legless Lizard habitat.

Biological Research and Survey

- Continue monitoring surveys of Striped Legless Lizard populations at Derrimut Grassland Reserve.

- Undertake research at other sites as determined by the Striped Legless Lizard Working Group. These include: Cobra-Killuc, Hamilton Community Parklands, Mortlake Common and more intensive surveys in the Colac and Ballarat Regions.
- Collect data on population dynamics, including mortality rates as a result of fire, that are especially needed for Population Viability Assessments.
- Incorporate into the research and monitoring program the collection of detailed botanical information on vegetation cover, species diversity and litter biomass at trapline survey sites.
- Undertake surveys in the Werribee, Melton and Merri Corridors and in other western suburbs sites with the assistance of volunteers and community groups.
- Carry out further computer modelling refinement using the PVA technique.

Habitat Conservation

- Permanently reserve, fence and manage the 100m buffer adjacent to the Western Ring Road development as part of Derrimut Grassland Reserve.
- Permanently reserve the expanded Laverton North Grassland Reserve and rehabilitate the part which was previously occupied by RMIT as recommended by DCE (1990).
- In conjunction with the Department of Planning and Housing and local planning authorities, endeavour to develop and implement planning and management actions to conserve significant portions of the Fitzgerald Road Grasslands and other freehold sites in perpetuity.
- Investigate the possibility of utilising the Conservation Land Marketing Program outlined in the State Conservation Strategy for Striped Legless Lizard habitat conservation.
- Encourage landowners to participate in the Land for Wildlife scheme and promote the benefits of habitat retention on farmland.

Habitat Management

- Complete the Draft Management Plans for Derrimut Grassland Reserve and St Albans Railway Reserves and the 'Grassland Management Guidelines'.
- Prepare the Draft Management Plan for Laverton North Grassland Reserve.
- Update the Cobra-Killuc State Wildlife Reserve Management Plan to incorporate actions included in this Action Statement
- Develop and implement appropriate fire-management and weed-control programs in both the Derrimut and Laverton North Grassland Reserves, and Cobra-Killuc Wildlife Reserve. Incorporate suitable techniques sensitive to the natural values of the areas concerned. Similarly, the recognition of other potential Striped Legless Lizard habitat sites (e.g. Lake Goldsmith) should be managed accordingly.

- Encourage landholder participation in habitat management by way of Public Authority Management Agreements, Land Management Co-operative Agreements, Conservation Covenants, LandCare, the Land for Wildlife Scheme and the Land Protection Incentives Scheme, and other assistance programs.

Captive Colony and Translocation

- Obtain relevant permits from DCE for the translocation program and any relocations proposed within Parks under the National Parks Act 1975.
- Where appropriate, translocate captive lizards to secure sites. The captive colony will also be used for interpretation activities, studies of population genetics and research into basic biology. Such research is needed to design, monitor and ensure the long-term success of a translocation program.
- Develop a contingency plan that can be implemented quickly to locate, rescue and translocate Striped Legless Lizards from sites which are about to be destroyed, particularly those on private land.
- Identify sites suitable for re-introduction of Striped Legless Lizards from the translocation program. Possible release sites may include Organ Pipes National Park, where grassland habitat is being restored, Gellibrand Hill Park and Laverton North Grassland Reserve. Other potential areas include the Board of Works Farm at Werribee, Werribee Park, Cobra-Killuc Wildlife Reserve, Mooramong, and at the Hamilton Community Parklands where grassland habitat suitable for the Eastern Barred Bandicoot is being managed.
- Also, active translocation may be needed between populations on small reserves to avoid inbreeding.

Interpretation and Community Awareness

- Establish interpretative facilities and educational displays at the Melbourne Zoo and within relevant DCE Regions to promote the conservation of the Striped Legless Lizard.
- Seek corporate sponsorship for community involvement in projects relating to Striped Legless Lizard and native grassland conservation, and provide support to the Friends of Delma.
- In rural areas promote the LandCare program and Land for Wildlife scheme among farmers and landholders.

Other Desirable Management Actions

Habitat Inventory

- Review and update past state-wide grassland surveys to assess sites of potential Striped Legless Lizard habitat.

Population Inventory

- Continue population inventories, with initial emphasis on areas under immediate threat in Melbourne Region and sites where Striped Legless Lizards have been recorded recently in Ballarat and Colac Regions. Survey

areas of known grassland habitat in conservation reserves such as Lake Goldsmith, V/Line railway reserves and other potential sites in DCE Regions where they have been known to occur.

- Develop co-operative arrangements with wildlife conservation bodies in South Australia, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory to encourage detailed survey effort nation-wide. Such a project could be instigated under the Federal Endangered Species Program.

Biological Research

- Continue and extend biological studies to provide information on genetics, reproduction, population dynamics and habitat requirements of the Striped Legless Lizard.

Habitat Conservation

- As far as possible, ensure that identified habitat areas are managed appropriately. Such actions would be based on a co-operative approach and where appropriate should be incorporated within the Conservation Program for Native Grasslands and Grassy Woodlands in Victoria (DCE in prep.) and the Action Plan for Remnant Native Grasslands and Grassy Woodlands of the Melbourne Area (DCE 1990).
- Continue habitat restoration programs where appropriate, for example at Mooramong and Organ Pipes National Park.
- Endeavour to acquire freehold sites of high grassland conservation value that are known to contain Striped Legless Lizard populations. The Conservation Land Marketing Program outlined in the State Conservation Strategy (Govt of Victoria 1987) could be a way of attracting private investment in land acquisition.

Social Research

- Initiate social research into the attitudes and behaviour of people living near native grasslands or grassy woodlands in order to more effectively target community awareness programs.

Legislative Powers Operating

Legislation

Wildlife Act 1975 regulates the taking and possessing of wildlife. The Striped Legless Lizard is protected wildlife under this Act.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 regulates taking of listed biota and protected flora from the wild, provides for habitat protection and promotes conservation actions.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 establishes planning schemes which include some conservation controls, and provides for management agreements.

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1975 ³/₄ provides for reserving areas as public land and for making a specific reservation status for existing public land.

Licence or Permit Conditions

A permit under the Wildlife Act to trap, take or possess the Striped Legless Lizard should only be issued if DCE is satisfied

that the proposal has a direct benefit to the conservation of the species. Such circumstances may include:

- approved research and survey projects;
- giving authority to hold a captive colony; or
- authorizing the translocation program.

The Striped Legless Lizard is regarded as a Non-Tradeable Item under the Wildlife Regulations and as such is excluded from the Wildlife Possession Schedule. There are no records of the Striped Legless Lizard being legally held by fanciers.

Consultation and Community Participation

Completed

Media Coverage

- Articles in local papers in the western suburbs and rural areas such as Hamilton, Colac, Ballarat and Horsham.

Management Negotiation

- Discussing tree-planting with Sunshine City Council and indicating that an urban forest park is inconsistent with grassland values.
- Discussing flora management and weed control with LaTrobe University Botany Department.
- Establishing a Friends of Delma group to assist and participate in works programs, translocation events and other activities designed to promote community education and awareness of the plight of the Striped Legless Lizard.
- Forming the Striped Legless Lizard Working Group, comprising representatives from DCE, Melbourne Zoo, tertiary institutes, Friends of Delma and the Herpetological Group.
- Negotiating with various municipalities, developers and landholders over management of grasslands on private land.

Projected

- Community consultation as part of the planning process when developing management plans for Derrimut and Laverton Grassland Reserves.
- Further publicity and development of public awareness about grassland conservation, following the release of the Draft Conservation Program for Native Grasslands and Grassy Woodlands in Victoria (DCE in prep.).
- Continuing production of extension and interpretive material to increase public awareness, and activities in local schools to familiarise students with grassland communities and their inhabitants.

Implementation, Evaluation and Review

Regional Managers in Regions where the Striped Legless Lizard occurs will be primarily responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Action Statement.

Recognising the need to co-ordinate these actions and to provide for an integrated approach to long-term

management, the Striped Legless Lizard Working Group will have as its main charter the role of overseeing research co-ordination and education/community extension activities. In view of the increasing urban encroachment threatening remaining grassland habitat, and the accumulation of additional survey data resulting from the intended actions proposed herein, it is recommended that the Action Statement be re-assessed every two years to ensure that on-going management practices meet the stated objectives. The Action Statement will be reviewed by March 1994.

Contacts

Management

The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Officer in the relevant Regions of DCE

Biology

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Graeme Coulson, Institute of Education, University of Melbourne

Chris Banks, Herpetology Department, Royal Melbourne Zoo

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Further information

Further information can be obtained from Department of Sustainability and Environment Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statements are available from the Department of Sustainability and Environment website: <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>

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