



# Fourth Crossing Wildlife factsheet



## Taipan

**scientific name**  
" *Oxyuranus* "

**other names**  
see below



**DANGEROUSLY VENOMOUS**

<https://mol.org/species/>

### Description

The **Coastal Taipan** can vary from yellow to red/brown to black. Individuals become darker in winter and paler in summer. Eyes are large, with an intense orange-brown iris and round pupil. The **Inland Taipan** has a robust build and varies from fawn to brown with a much paler head compared to body, the colour can also change seasonally. Eyes are large with dark iris and large pupil. The **Central Ranges Taipan** has light, sandy brown coloured scales.

Taipan's have an average of five to six feet in length, reaching up to 11 feet. The Coastal Taipan is the largest.

The taipan is a fast moving and dangerously venomous elapid. There are three species in Australia, the Coastal Taipan (*Oxyuranus scutellatus*) shown in the above photograph, the Inland Taipan (*O. microlepidotus*) and a recently discovered Central Ranges Taipan (*O. temporalis*). It is also found in New Guinea (Papuan Taipan - *Oxyuranus scutellatus canni*). The Coastal Taipan's range extends from north-western Western Australia, the Northern Territory, across Cape York Peninsula, and south in eastern Queensland into northern New South Wales (as far south as Grafton). The Inland Taipan – also known as the Western Taipan, Small-scaled Snake, or Fierce Snake – inhabits the semiarid regions where the Queensland and South Australia borders converge. The Central Ranges Taipan – also known as the Western Desert Taipan - inhabits the central ranges region in western central Australia, where the three provinces of the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and South Australia intersect.

The taipan inhabits a variety of areas including cane fields, woodlands and monsoon forests. The diet consists of small mammals such as rats and bandicoots. In fact, its venom is specifically adapted to kill warm-blooded animals. Taipans produce a clutch of eggs, anywhere from one to two dozen. It is a very swift snake, usually fleeing when threatened but it has been known to defend itself when harassed. Bites can be multiple and in rapid succession.