



PIAA
Pet Industry Association

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Fact Sheet



Buying & caring for native reptiles in NSW

Native reptiles such as lizards, snakes and turtles need special care and can only be bought from a licensed pet shop or licensed animal keeper.

Only reptiles bred in captivity can be legally bought and sold. You'll need to buy your native reptile pet from a licensed pet shop or licensed animal keeper. This helps ensure native animals are protected in their natural environment. You can also join a reptile group (herpetological society) to meet other reptile keepers and find out how to care for your native pet.

Choose a reptile you want to keep from the [NSW native Animal Keepers' Species List](#).

If the reptile you want isn't on the list, it might be non-native/exotic or it might be a native animal not able to be kept as a pet. Only animals on the list can be kept as pets.

If you want to keep a native reptile as a pet, you will need a biodiversity conservation licence granted under the [Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016](#).

What type of biodiversity conservation licence you get will depend on how many animals you want to keep and the type of animal you want. [Work out what licence you need](#).

Buying your pet

Once you have a licence, you can buy your pet from a licensed pet shop or licensed animal keeper. Some pet shops are licensed to sell reptiles in NSW. These currently include:

[Absolute Aquariums](#)

[Bob's Birdz-n-Pets](#)

[Diamond Reptile Supplies](#)

[Jetty Pets](#)

[Extreme Pets](#)

[Fins, Fangs & Feathers](#)

[Kellyville Pets](#)

[Macarthur Pets](#)

[Tamworth Pet Centre](#)

If you buy a reptile from someone in another state you must already hold a NSW Native Animal Keeper Licence and you must get a licence. [Work out what licence you need](#).

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Care for your pet

You will need an escape-proof enclosure and the right food and water for your new pet(s). You also need to know about standards for heating, lighting and cage furniture for reptiles.

The [Code of Practice for the Private Keeping of Reptiles](#) has information on care standards. You can also talk to experts in the area such as reptile groups, licensed pet shops, dealers or breeders.

Snake owners should follow these practical guidelines [Hygiene Protocol for the Control of Disease in Captive Snakes](#). Snake diseases pose a risk to wild snakes and captive populations.

Keep a record book

All reptile keepers, except those who hold a Companion Animal Keeper Licence, must by law keep a record of their animals. Find out more about [keeping records](#).

Rehome your pet

If you no longer want your pet reptile, you can rehome it with someone who does. You can:

- return it to the licensed pet shop you bought the animal from
- sell it to another licensed reptile keeper
- give it to a care group who will contact the Department regarding rehoming

You cannot release your native reptile into your backyard or the bush as this is bad for the welfare of your animal and can impact native wildlife populations.

Guidelines

Anyone licensed by the Department to keep reptiles must abide by the Code of Practice for the Private Keeping of Reptiles. This is to make sure animals are responsibly looked after.

The Code of Practice for the Private Keeping of Reptiles is a guide for people licensed by the Department to keep reptiles as pets. The Code:

- must be complied with
- is designed to contribute to the wellbeing of reptiles in captivity
- has been prepared in consultation with reptile (herpetological) societies, vets, animal exhibitors and researchers
- is supported by the NSW Animal Welfare Advisory Council of the Department of Primary Industries
- contains standards and guidelines for keeping pet reptiles.

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment staff do regular audits of reptile keepers to assess compliance.

The Code provides guidance on:

- enclosure construction – standards for building outdoor and indoor enclosures as well as special requirements for housing dangerously venomous snakes
- enclosure sizes – minimum spatial requirements for reptiles based on their size and behaviour
- enclosure environment – standards for temperature, air ventilation, humidity, lighting and UV light requirements
- enclosure furnishing – standards for substrate provision and furniture such as hides
- food, water and cleaning – standards for food and water provision and hygiene
- transport – standards on containers for transporting reptiles
- quarantine – guidelines on ways to reduce the risk of disease transmission between reptiles
- record keeping.

[DOWNLOAD THE CODE](#)

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