Reptiles of Wau Creek
Palai, Sinek, Trausel na Pukpuk

Brown Cat Snake, Boiga irregularis. Colubridae. Widely distributed in Papua New Guinea to elevations of 1400m in diverse habitats from dense forest to disturbed agricultural land. Nocturnal, it preys upon birds, lizards, bats and small rodents. Feeds on small vertebrates. Up to 2m.


Water Drongos, Hypsiparus magnus. Agamidae. Female showed. Widespread in New Guinea up to an elevation of 8000m. A principal raider of the nests of the pig-nosed turtle. Ambush predator, primarily carnivorous, occasional stinger, crabs, molluscs and occasionally vegetation. Can inflict a severe bite. Shell length up to 2m.

Crowned Forest Dragon, Hypsiparus doliolus. Agamidae. Found in primary and secondary rainforests of New Guinea and associated islands to an elevation of 3000m. Diurnal and arboreal, feeds on insects and small fruits. Oviparous. Harmless. Up to 3m.

New Guinea Giant Softshell Turtle, Pelochelys bibroni. Chelidae. A large turtle found in the larger rivers and deltas of southern New Guinea. Secretive, solitary nester, poorly known. Comes to Wau Creek to nest. Ambush predator, primarily carnivorous, occasional fish, crabs, molluscs and occasionally vegetation. Oviparous. Shell length up to 1m. Harmless. Up to 25cm.

Giant Mud Turtle, Kinosternon subrubrum. Emydidae. A large turtle found in the larger rivers and deltas of New Guinea, associated islands and northern Australia, to an elevation of 1600m. Nocturnal and arboreal, feeds on small mammals. Ambush predator. Juvenile yellow (shown) or red turning green at about 15 years of age. Oviparous. Harmless. Up to 3m.


Shrub Whiptail Skink, Emoia longicauda. Gekkonidae. A large lizard found in damp forests near lowland rivers, mangroves and permanent inland lakes and swamps. Fossorial, living and moving through the leaf litter of the rainforest floor, presumably in search of invertebrates including earthworms, arthropods and cruspecies. Otherwise, habits poorly known. Size 40cm.

New Guinea Freshwater Crocodile, Crocodylus novaeguineae. Crocodylidae. Occupies tributaries, freshwater swamps, marshes and lakes. Largely nocturnal when they feed on fish, turtles (including pig-nosed turtle) and other small animals. Oviparous. Shell length up to 2m. Harmless. Up to 25cm.

Gekko’s Forest Skinks, Cyrtodactylus gekko. Gekkonidae. A large arboreal species that occupies large trees in the rainforest. Often seen moving through low foliage. Diurnal, insectivorous, Oviparous, laying one or more commonly two eggs in leaf litter on the forest floor. Up to 10cm.


Mangrove Monitor, Varanus indicus. Varanidae. A large lizard found in damp forests near lowland rivers, mangroves and permanent inland lakes and swamps. Carnivorous scavenger feeding on the eggs of reptiles and birds, molluscs, crustaceans, invertebrates, fish and carrion. A principal predator of the nests of the pig-nosed turtle. Oviparous. Up to 65cm in length.

Poster prepared by A. Georges, Deb Bower, Simon Clulow and Yolarnie Amepou.

Accommodation has been constructed in support of visiting scientists. The ten chalets are a diverse group of g cracks and boulders. The habitat is uncertain, and this species from Wau Creek may well be undescribed. Nocturnal, sheltering during the day below tree bark and crowns. Insectivorous. Oviparous, laying 1-2 eggs per clutch. Harmless, but will bite aggressively if handled. Oviparous. Up to 10cm.

Pacific Blue Tailed Skinks, Emoia constrictans. Scincidae. Widespread in the Pacific islands including New Guinea, where it is found in clearings in the forest. Often seen moving through low foliage. Diurnal, insectivorous. Oviparous, laying two or more commonly two eggs in leaf litter on the forest floor. Up to 2cm.


Axolotl Python, Morelia viridis. Pythonidae. New Guinea’s largest snake, typically reaching lengths of 3.5m but as much as 4.5m. Widespread in New Guinea and northern Australia, where it occupies forest and scrubland. Feeds on birds, bats, rats, possums and other small mammals; larger snakes feed on cauzu and wallabies. Non-venomous.

Shrub Whiptail Skink, Emoia longicauda. Gekkonidae. Common in rainforests of southern New Guinea and associated islands to an elevation of 2500m. Nocturnal and arboreal, feeds on small skinks. An able climber, it also forages on the ground. Non-venomous, but will bite aggressively if handled. Oviparous. Up to 1.5m in length.


Pacific Blue Tailed Skink, Emoia constrictans. Scincidae. Widespread in the Pacific islands including New Guinea, where it is found in clearings in the forest. Often seen moving through low foliage. Diurnal, insectivorous. Oviparous, laying two or more commonly two eggs in leaf litter on the forest floor. Up to 2cm.

Southern Bent-toed Gecko, Cyrtodactylus novaeguineae. Gekkonidae. A large arboreal species that occupies large trees in the rainforest. Often seen moving through low foliage. Diurnal, insectivorous. Oviparous, laying one or more commonly two eggs in leaf litter on the forest floor. Up to 10cm.

Water Dragon, Hypsilurus magnus. Agamidae. Female shown. Widespread in New Guinea up to an elevation of 800m. A principal raider of the nests of the pig-nosed turtle. Ambush predator, primarily carnivorous, occasional fish, crabs, molluscs and occasionally vegetation. Can inflict a severe bite. Shell length up to 2m.

Pig-nosed Turtle, Carettochelys insculpta. Carettochelyidae. A large tortoise found in the larger rivers and deltas of southern New Guinea. Omnivorous, feeding on mangrove leaves, flowers and fruits of mangroves in riverine deltas. Also crustaceans, molluscs and occasionally carrion. Comes to Wau Creek to nest. Shell length up to 35cm. Photo: Ricardo França Silva, Piku Team.