

KEY TO THE GOANNAS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

FAMILY VARANIDAE

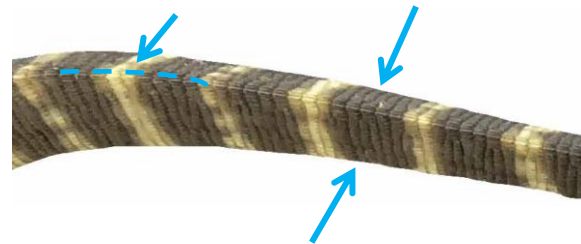
(GENUS: *Varanus*)

1. a. Tail round in cross section throughout its length; tail scales larger than body scales and may be rough or projecting. **2**
- b. Tail flattened from side to side, at least in its posterior two-thirds, with a distinct dorsal keel; scales of the tail similar to those on the body. **5**



Varanus tristis

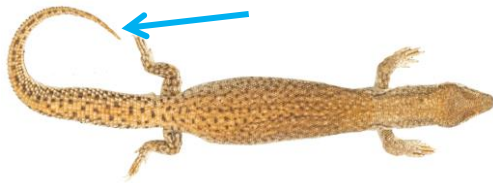
1a. Sides not flattened; scales relatively large and rough



Varanus gouldii

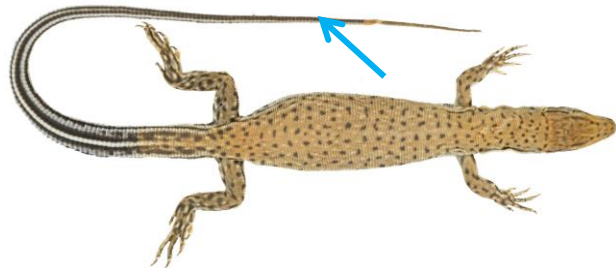
1b. Sides flattened; a single keeled scale row along midline

2. a. Tail shorter than head and body. ***V. brevicauda***
- b. Tail longer than head and body. **3**



Varanus brevicauda

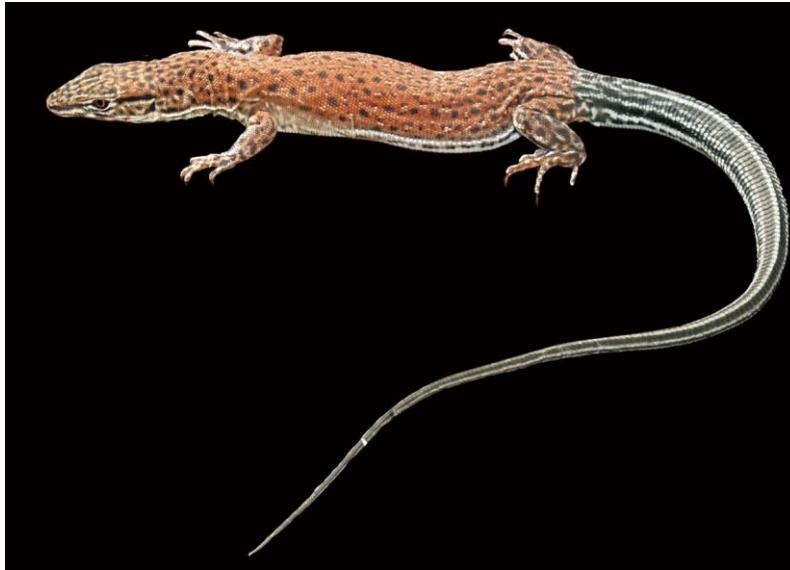
2a. Short, rather spiny tail



Varanus eremius

2b. Long, slender tail

3. a. Colour and pattern of tail (pale grey with strong longitudinal cream stripes) sharply different to that of body (uniformly sandy orange with scattered dark spots). ***V. eremius***
- b. Colour and pattern of tail not sharply different from that of the body. **4**



Varanus eremius

3a. Striped grey tail, spotted orange body

- 4. a. Dorsal colour predominantly light grey; back and base of tail with well separated irregular dark brown crossbars ***V. gilleni***
- b. Dorsal colour reddish to yellowish brown to black, back pattern (when present) cross rows of elliptical, sandy spots, each with a dark centre; head, shoulders and much of the tail usually darker, or even solidly black (dark pigment absent in some populations from the north-west ranges) ***V. tristis***



Varanus gilleni (photo: A. Fenner)

4a. Grey with darker cross-bands



Varanus tristis

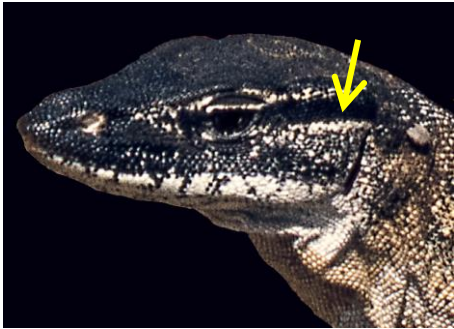
4b. Black-tailed colour pattern



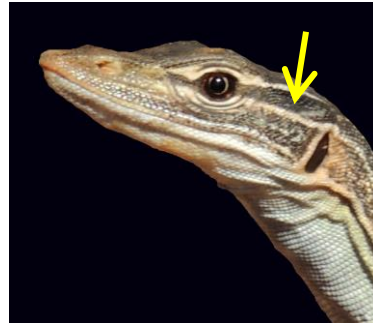
Varanus tristis

4b. Pale colour pattern

- 5 a. A dark stripe edged above and below by pale outlines runs from the eye to the top of the ear; throat plain whitish or weakly speckled. 6
- b. No dark stripe edged above and below by pale outlines from eye to ear; throat with distinctive pattern, either strong dark cross bands or a black network pattern. 8



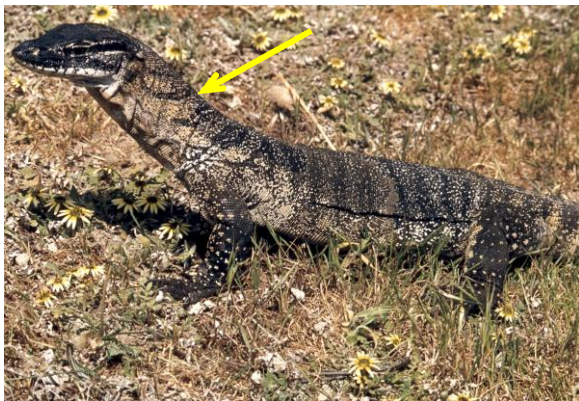
Varanus rosenbergi



Varanus gouldii

5b. Dark stripe from eye to ear and pale throat with little or no pattern

- 6. a. Overall blackish grey; pattern on neck and back includes broad dark grey cross-bands (continuing right across the underside of the belly); banding on tail extends to the tip in adults ***V. rosenbergi***
- b. Overall orange-brown; neck with pale lateral longitudinal stripes; body brown to orange with cross rows of yellow spots or black and yellow rosettes; terminal part of the tail yellow 7



Varanus rosenbergi

6a. Dark bands across the neck



Varanus gouldii

6b. Pale stripes along the neck

- 7 a. Terminal part of tail uniformly yellow; rest of tail brown with numerous narrow yellow bands ***V. gouldii***
- b. Terminal part of tail pale yellow with darker markings; rest of tail sandy brown with cross-rows of small circular spots, alternately yellow and black. ***V. panoptes****

**V. panoptes has not yet been recorded in South Australia but it occurs close to the north-eastern border around Birdsville in SW Queensland, and its habitat appears to continue into South Australia.*



Varanus gouldii

7a. Tail striped, terminal part plain yellow



Varanus panoptes (J. de Jong)

7b. Tail spotted, terminal part yellowish with darker markings

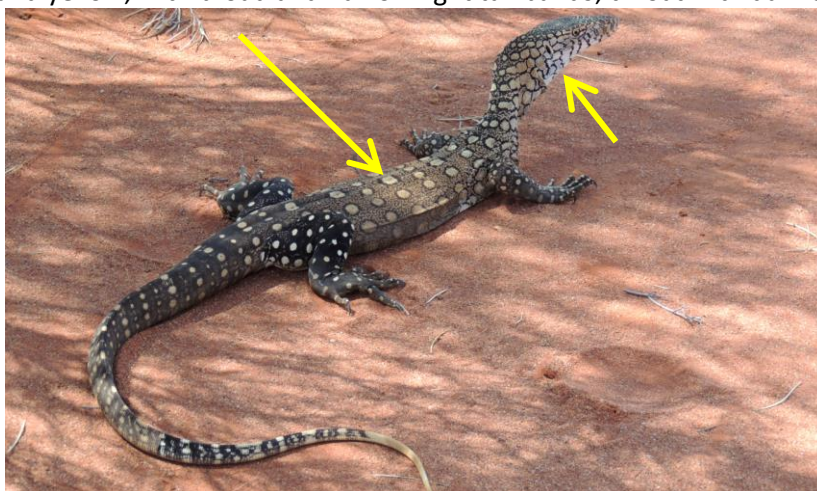
8 a. General colour blackish with numerous small yellowish and sometimes light blue speckles that outline broad dark cross-bands which frequently continue across throat and chin area and on to the belly; tail with irregular broad and narrow pale bands. ***V. varius***

8 b. Dorsally light brown, with very large cream black-edged spots on body which are arranged in cross-rows; neck and throat white with a pattern of black lines forming a coarse network . . ***V. giganteus***



Varanus varius

8a. Black and yellow, with broad and narrow light tail bands; throat with dark cross-bands



Varanus giganteus

8b. Large black-edged pale yellow spots; throat with black network pattern