

PREHENSILE-TAILED SKINK

Kingdom: Animalia **Phylum:** Chordata **Class:** Reptilia **Order:** Squamata **Family:** Scinidae
Corucia zebrata

Description: Known by many other names such as Giant skink, Solomon Island skink, monkey-tail skink, it is the largest of the skinks

Length: 32 inches

Weight: 14-28 ounces

Habitat: Tropical rainforests

Distribution: Solomon Islands

Diet: Herbivorous

Life Span: 7-9 years in the wild and 20 in captivity

Status: Threatened

Special Characteristics:

- Spends little time on the ground
- Nocturnal, they hide in tree cavities during the day.
- Its large powerful claws and long prehensile tail enable it to cling to trees.
- This tail acts like an extra appendage, allowing the skink to climb and hang on to trees. The tail makes up half of the body length.
- It is usually found in the oldest trees in primary forests.
- The skin of the prehensile-tailed skink is smoother and shinier than any other lizard's and the scales are smooth, flat, and overlapping.
- The body of the prehensile-tailed skink ranges in color from dark green to almost black. Black, yellow, and shades of green decorate the back, tail, and belly in random spots or stripes. These color patterns and slow movement help camouflage the prehensile-tailed skink from its enemies.
- Unlike other lizards, the prehensile-tailed skink does not have the ability to regenerate if its tail should break off when caught by predators.
- The strong jaws and short tongue aid it in grasping its prey.
- Individuals are identified by smell
- Territorial disputes erupt between males.

Reproduction:

- The prehensile-tailed skink is ovoviviparous—meaning the female produces eggs that hatch within her body and are nurtured there for 6-7 months.
- Usually a single birth.
- The baby is 6-9 in. long and stays with the mother for about 6 months after birth.
- The father will also defend the baby—something unusual in the reptile world.
- Mature at 3 years old.

