

SPECIES AT RISK

Alpine she-oak skink *Cyclodomorphus praealtus* EPBC status: **Endangered**

The nationally endangered alpine she-oak skink is a medium-sized lizard with a slender body reaching up to 24cm in length and is olive-green to reddish-brown in colour.

The alpine she-oak skink can only be found in the grasslands of the Australian Alps, and its habitat is being seriously degraded.

Alpine she-oak skinks know what they like and have very specific habitat requirements. They only live at the top of isolated alpine and sub-alpine mountain habitats and like tree-less (or very lightly treed) areas that contain tussock grasses, low heath or a combination of both.

Loss and degradation of habitat, wildfire and climate change are the greatest threats to the alpine she-oak skink. Feral horses are just one of the factors that are driving vegetation changes that negatively affect skinks living in the alps.

Horses alter grasslands to be low, sparse and weedy, resulting in poor habitat for alpine she-oak skinks and making them more vulnerable to predation, overheating and local extinctions.

The removal of feral horses that graze and trample habitat is important piece of the puzzle to ensure the survival of the alpine she-oak skink.

References

NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee 2011, Alpine she-oak skink (*Cyclodomorphus praealtus*) -endangered species listing.

Alpine she-oak skinks live within highly restricted, fragmented geographical "islands" that make them particularly vulnerable to catastrophic disturbance.

They are at risk from habitat loss caused by: trampling and grazing from feral horses, deer and pigs, fires, climate change and the construction of infrastructure.



Photo: Zak Atkins

