

The spectacular Otago skink occurs nowhere else in the world except Otago.

They are New Zealand's largest skink (up to 30 cm long) and are black with gold markings – a real Central Otago icon!

They are special lizards:

- they live on schist rock outcrops
- eat invertebrates and small fruits
- give birth to live young (very unusual for lizards)
- produce 2-3 offspring per year (slow breeders)
- become sexually mature at 4 years (slow to reach sexual maturity)
- survive for up to 12 years in the wild (long lived)



There is an urgent problem

Otago skinks have disappeared from more than 90% of their range and are now confined to two disjunct, relict populations. They used to exist in Alexandra only 30 years ago!

Somewhere between 500 and 2000 skinks remain, and they are predicted to be extinct in 10-20 years.

The reasons are:

- predation by introduced cats, ferrets, stoats, weasels, rats and mice
- loss of habitat

The Central Otago community has formed a partnership with the Department of Conservation to help save the species.

You can help:

The **CENTRAL OTAGO ECOLOGICAL TRUST** would like to involve the community to help establish a sanctuary in the Aldinga Conservation Area behind Alexandra. This will be called the **“MOKOMOKO DRYLAND SANCTUARY”**

We want the community to help us:

- Restore the native vegetation at the site
- Re-establish a population of Otago skinks and other reptile species inside a predator-proof fence

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*Photo: Site of the Sanctuary
behind Conroy's Dam.*

MOKOMOKO DRYLAND SANCTUARY



*A community initiative
to help save an iconic species
unique to Otago*

OTAGO SKINKS