

Brown tree snake

Boiga irregularis

KEY FEATURES



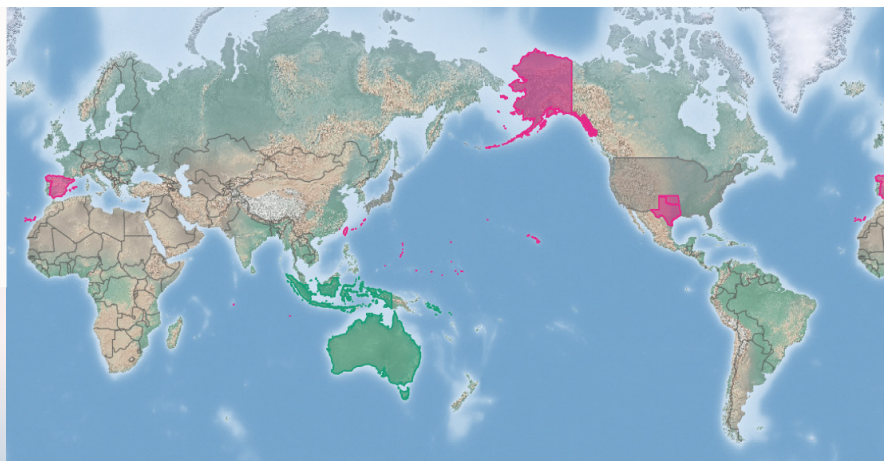
- A slender, climbing snake with large eyes and a vertical pupil in the eye
- The head is wider than the neck. Markings may be either vague or distinct blotches on a brownish- yellow background. Some can have black speckling
- The snakes are 38 cm long at hatching and can reach three metres, but are usually 1–2 metres
- They are skilful climbers and can crawl through very small openings
- The female produces 4–12 oblong eggs, 42–47 mm long and 18–22 mm wide. The eggs have a leathery shell and often stick together. Two clutches of eggs can be produced each year
- Eggs are laid in hollow logs, rock crevices and other sites where they are likely protected from drying and high temperatures
- The female snake can store sperm and produce eggs over several years after mating
- Brown tree snake is mildly poisonous. The venom trickles slowly into a bite victim from rear fangs. It will readily strike when annoyed, but is not a danger to adults. The snake can coil around babies. Babies and children who are bitten must get emergency medical treatment



PATHWAYS

- Introduced
- Native
- Origin not recorded

- Shipping/Military
- Biological control
- Pet trade



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IMPACTS



Environment

Power outages caused by snakes have been a serious problem on Guam. Fear of the brown tree snake may cause tourists to avoid Guam. An agricultural pest.



Health

Mildly venomous, the snake is a potential health hazard to infants and young children.

Responsible for 1/1000 hospital emergency visits on Guam. Also danger of increased disease from insects that were previously eaten by native animals.



Society and Culture

None specifically reported, but animals that may have been important culturally are no longer seen on Guam.



Economy

Has caused extinction of more than half of Guam's native birds & lizards and two of Guam's three bats. Loss of these pollinators caused "cascading" effects on ecosystems, reducing plant regeneration, diversity and coverage.

DISTRIBUTION

Native range

Eastern Indonesia, New Guinea, Solomon Islands and the coastal areas of northern and eastern Australia.

Introduced range

The population on Guam is the only confirmed breeding population outside of its native range, although it may be established on Saipan. Encounters have been reported from Micronesia, United States mainland, Hawai'i and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

SOURCES

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Text: *Boiga irregularis* (brown tree snake) – CABI

Map: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/91542>



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme

