

Frilled Lizard Facts: Lesson for Kids

Cite this lesson

What do you do when you are scared? Maybe hide, run to someone you trust, or even stand up tall and face your fears? A certain Australian reptile does something pretty unique and effective when it is scared. Let's find out by reading this lesson about the frilled lizard.

The Frilled Lizard

There is something very interesting about the frilled lizard. When it's scared or sees a predator, its first reaction is to look bigger and more frightening. The predator could be a bird, larger lizard, snake, cat, or dingoes (a wild dog that lives in Australia). To scare the predator away, the frilled lizard opens its pink or yellow mouth, stands up on two back legs. It then pops up the large piece of colorful thin, extra skin surrounding its neck, like an umbrella.

The frilled lizard stands in front of its predator, with mouth open and frill out, then hisses to really try to scare it away. It then might pound its tail on the ground and even jump toward the predator. If all of this doesn't work, the frilled lizard runs away to the nearest tree for safety, still with its frill out and mouth open. When its frill is down, it lays over its back like a superhero's cape.

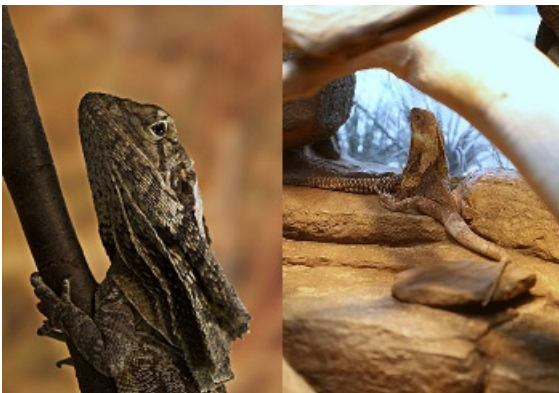
The running pattern of the frilled lizard is also pretty interesting to watch. When you run, you put one foot in front of the other, but the frilled lizard keeps its four legs out and spins, like when you pedal a bicycle. It can even run on just its two back legs.



When a predator is near, the frilled lizard stands on its back legs and opens its mouth and frill to look bigger.

Where Do Frilled Lizards Live?

The frilled lizard lives in northern Australia and Papua New Guinea. It likes tropical and warm forests, grassy plains, and lots of trees. This is great for the frilled lizard because it spends most of its time in trees. And it has excellent **camouflage**, which means it blends in very well with its environment for protection. It's gray and brown, scaly skin has patterns like the bark of a tree, making it very difficult for predators to see it when the frilled lizard perches on a tree trunk.



The scaly skin of a frilled lizard blends in.

What Do Frilled Lizards Eat?

The frilled lizard does most of its hunting in trees, although it sometimes comes down to search for food, especially after it rains. The frilled lizard eats mostly insects, like ants, cicadas, and termites, as well as spiders. It will also eat small lizards, along with small mammals like mice and rats. The frilled lizard eats its prey with **chisel teeth**, meaning the teeth are part of its jaw bone and don't fall out or grow back like yours do.

Baby Frilled Lizards

Because the frilled lizard is a **reptile**, it not only has scaly skin but also lays eggs. The female lays 4-23 eggs in a sandy hole in the ground, surrounded by a little grass and leaves. Sunlight keeps the eggs warm until they hatch after about 70 days. That's around 2.5 months.

After hatching, baby frilled lizards are completely able to take care of themselves, unlike human babies who cannot survive without care. But baby frilled lizards can hunt and even use their frill from the first day they hatch!

Frilled lizards grow pretty large, up to 3ft. from nose to tail. This is about as long as your arms from fingertip to fingertip when you spread both of them out wide.

Summary

The frilled lizard is a **reptile** from Australia and Papua New Guinea. It spends most of its time in trees and has excellent **camouflage**. It eats insects, spiders, and small animals with its **chisel teeth**. When scared by predators, it opens its large frill, hisses, and runs away if needed. Baby frilled lizards are independent from the first day they hatch.



The frilled lizard grows up to 3ft. long.