

The Inland Carpet Python



Left: The Inland Carpet Python inhabits areas along waterways dominated by Black Box and River Red Gum. Photo: Peter Robertson

Above: Hollows in fallen logs make ideal nesting places for the Inland Carpet Python. Photo: MCMA

The Inland Carpet Python (*Morelia spilota metcalfei*) can most often be found in floodplain and riverine woodlands throughout the Mallee region.

The Mallee Catchment Management Authority is responsible for undertaking work that protects threatened species, such as the Inland Carpet Python.

Identification made easy

The Inland Carpet Python is a slow-moving python up to 190cm long, with an intricate pattern that consists mostly of black and

shades of grey. The back is dark with pale markings and the sides are pale with a dark longitudinal stripe.

Ecology

This python is a non-venomous snake and a protected species. Primarily nocturnal, it hunts for small- to medium-sized mammals at night. Breeding occurs every third or fourth year in spring, with an average of 20 eggs laid per clutch. Inland Carpet Pythons are the only Victorian snake to exhibit parental care, with the female incubating the eggs for up to 60 days.



At a glance

- The Inland Carpet Python grows up to 190cm long.
- It is a slow-moving non-venomous snake and a threatened species.
- Of its variety of habitats, Black Box and River Red Gum dominate.

Where it lives

In the Mallee, the Inland Carpet Python inhabits areas along waterways dominated by Black Box and River Red Gum. Here, fallen logs and leaf litter provide the python with shelter from predators and habitat for their prey. Inland Carpet Pythons may also use rabbit burrows as a source of shelter and food, particularly in the summer months when temperatures are high.

Historically, these pythons were also found in mallee shrublands, Callitris woodlands and freshwater swamps, and may still be present in these habitats.

A matter of survival

The Inland Carpet Python is listed as endangered under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. A number of threats to this python in Victoria have been identified including:

- clearing and degradation of habitat, mostly through cultivation and intense grazing
- the removal of old trees and logs for firewood
- inappropriate fire regimes that degrade understorey vegetation
- changed flooding regimes in riverine areas
- deliberate killing or illegal collection
- accidental death through road kills
- predation by foxes, feral cats and pigs
- reduced availability of prey.

How we can help

The Mallee CMA welcomes public feedback regarding recent and past sightings of the Inland Carpet Python. This information will help target future work with this threatened species.



Above: Fallen timber is a key part of this typical Inland Carpet Python habitat. Photo: MCMA

Left: The Inland Carpet Python is a non-venomous and slow-moving snake. Photo: Peter Robertson

You can also help the Inland Carpet Python to recover by:

- leaving large fallen timber on the ground as shelter
- retaining and enhancing vegetation along watercourses and surrounding areas to protect habitat for pythons and their prey
- fencing habitat remnants to protect from heavy grazing
- controlling feral predators (e.g. foxes, feral cats and pigs)
- employing responsible rabbit control by ripping with vigilance and only in the cooler months.

Inland Carpet Pythons are an important part of the biodiversity of the region. In addition, because they consume rodents and rabbits they can be useful in the control of vermin.

Find out more

For further information contact the Mallee CMA on (03) 5051 4377.

Source: Action Statement, *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, Department of Sustainability and Environment

Project Partners



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