

Nature Notes

Northern Alligator

Lizard



An alligator in the Kimberley Nature Park?! Not likely! The Northern alligator lizard may have some likeness to an alligator but that is where the comparison ends.

This lizard is Canada's largest with a total length of 25 cm (10



inches). The coloration is brownish green on the back with irregular dark spots thus blending into their surroundings and making them hard to spot. Their long tails are twice their body length and will readily break off if grabbed, a unique survival feature. The lizard has no problem re-growing a new tail section. Another interesting characteristic is a prominent longitudinal fold of

Photo by Wikipedia, Northern Alligator Lizard

skin on each side of the body that allows for expansion of the sides when it feeds, breathes or is pregnant.

These wary lizards prefer cooler environments and are often found in forest clearings, forest edges, under logs and bark, usually in a group. Although they like cooler, damper places they are often found in rock rubble slopes that are associated with forests. Their main diet is insects, ticks and spiders. The alligator lizard hibernates during the winter in underground dens. Mating occurs in the spring and the live young are born mid-August to September producing litters of up to fifteen.



Photo by Reptiles of BC, Thompson River University

Visit www.rockies.net/kimberley/naturepark for a hard copy or more information about Nature Park events.