



FACTSHEET

# Dugite





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**Common Name:** Rottnest Island Dugite

**Scientific Name:** *Psuedonaja affinis exilis*

**Noongar Name:** Dobotj

**Conservation Status:** Not listed under IUCN (2016). Listed as Vulnerable under the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950. All Rottnest Island's fauna is protected under the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987*.

**Habitat:** Coastal habitat, Limestone heath, Woodland, Settlement area

**Body length:** 1005 mm

**Weight:** up to 1.5 kg

**Gestation period:** 65-90 days

**Number of young:** 1-15 (12-15 eggs)

**Description:**

The Rottnest Island Dugite is genetically separate from the mainland population and is generally smaller than the mainland version. It is blackish brown all over. It has a long, slim body with a small head. Its blackish brown eyes are large and have a

golden orange rim. There is also a defined ridge above the eye. Its scales are quite large for its body and give it a semi-glossy look.

**Diet:**

Frogs, lizards, snakes, birds, small mammals.

**In the Wild:**

Dugites live in abandoned burrows or hollow logs. They can also be found sheltering underneath rocks or logs. In the summer months, they are often seen sunning themselves on roadsides.

Dugites search for prey in holes, cracks, small caves, grasses and under surface debris. It kills its prey by biting it and injecting venom and by wrapping its body around the animal and squeezing. This wrapping and squeezing is called constriction.

Dugites are very shy but will attack if they feel threatened. When it attacks, it lifts its head and front part of its body up into an S-shape. It hisses loudly and then makes a

sharp strike. This snake has small fangs but highly toxic venom which is dangerous to humans.

These snakes should never be approached and should only be watched from a distance. Anyone who may have been bitten by a snake should find medical help immediately.

### **Threats:**

- Predation by other snakes
- Roadkill

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Dugites are cannibalistic. They eat members of their own species as well as other snakes. An individual Dugite can swallow another snake almost as large as itself!