

ANATOM SKINK

What are they called?

Scientific:

Emoia aneityumensis

Other Common

English: Anatom Emo Skink, Medway's Emo Skink

French:

Bislama: Anatom Skink

Vernacular:

A little bit about them:

Skinks are lizard reptiles. The Anatom Skink lives in undisturbed forest away from humans. It lives in trees, from rainforest to dry coastal forests on Aneityum island in southern Vanuatu (and it is not found on neighbouring islands).

Females lay about 4-5 eggs at a time and it is thought the females descend to the ground to lay them in the forest floor litter near the base of a tree.

Skinks eat small invertebrates (mostly insects) although the diet of this species is largely unknown. It is very difficult to find.

What do they look like?

This lizard is around 7-10cm long, including a long tail. It is light brown with some orange-brown, dark-green and some grey colouring and small dark spots down it's sides.

Underneath it is creamy white. It's whole body is covered in smooth moderate-sized scales.

Similar *Emoia* skinks, such as the *Emoia samoensis* in Samoa, can be found on multiple islands of Vanuatu and the Pacific. It is often very difficult to tell the difference by eye alone. The only difference when looking at the picture below compared to the Anatom skink is the number of small scales on it's sides and fingers.



© Robert Fisher, USGS

Source: IUCNredlist.org entry for Samoan Skink

Did you know?

- This species is only found on Aneityum island!

The Anatom Skink is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

Why are they threatened?

- Their major threat is habitat loss by logging and agricultural expansion.
- They only live on one small island so they are at risk of being wiped out by one natural disaster such as a severe cyclone.
- They are also at risk of the pet trade industry even though it is illegal to take these lizards out of their natural environment.

What can we do for them?

- ✓ Manage logging in sustainable forests only.
- ✓ Establishing protected areas that include the habitat of the Anatom skink in Aneityum.

What they do for us?

- Skinks are important in food chains. They eat and control populations of insects that can be pests or carry diseases.
- They are food for bigger animals.
- They help disperse seeds.
- Lizards are biological indicators for health of ecosystems as they are sensitive to changes in their environment.
- There are only 19 species of lizards in Vanuatu, and only 4 are endemic.



Want to know more?

- ❖ Visit: www.iucnredlist.org
- ❖ Visit: The Reptile Database online <http://www.reptile-database.org/>
- ❖ Read Reptiles and Amphibians of the Pacific Islands by G.R. Zug.

