

Tuatara



Weight and Size

- They measure up to _____ from head to tail tip.
- Weigh up to _____



Physical Features

- They have a spiny crest along the back that is more noticeable in males
- Tuatara have the ability to hear but no external ear is present
- A unique physical feature Tuatara have is their photoreceptive eye or “third eye”

Scientific Classifications

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: _____

Order: Rhynchocephalia

Family: Sphenodontidae

Genus: Sphenodon

Habitat

- Located only in _____
- Tuatara are threatened by habitat loss and introduced predators
- Tuatara were once found across the New Zealand mainland, but are now almost exclusively confined to offshore islands

Evolutionary Facts

- Tuatara are sometimes called “_____”
- Their skeleton contains a number of unique features, some of them evolutionary retained from fish
- The species has between five and six billion pairs of DNA sequence

Reproduction

- Reproduction of Tuatara is a _____ process due to many factors
- One factor is that Tuatara take 10 to 20 years to reach sexual maturity
- Female Tuatara lay eggs once every four years

Reproduction

- The reproduction occurs at 2-5 year intervals, the slowest in any reptile
- Wild Tuataras known to continue reproduces at later stages in life, for example a tuatara became a father at age 111 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QIGJwyIQiE>
- Several Tuatara _____ programs are active currently

Lifespan

- Tuatara probably have the _____ growth rates in any reptiles
- They continue to grow larger for the first 35 years of their lives
- The average lifespan is about 60 years, but they can live to be older than 100 years old

Fun Fact

- Tuataras' worst enemies are rats because when the first humans arrived to New Zealand, they brought rats and other animals that devoured tuatara eggs and hatchlings. The situation was so dire that the New Zealand government fully protected tuatara in 1985

Sources

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