

Ari

There are more species of lizards than any other type of reptile combined, so your chance of spotting one in the rainforest is pretty high. The flying dragon or draco lizard can be spotted gliding back and forth between trees in the canopy layer. These lizards live in the rainforests or other wooded areas in the Philippines and in Southeast Asia.

The Flying Dragon Lizard is built in a very interesting way, which allows it to 'fly', or glide, in the air. When imagining the animal in its habitat, one would probably picture it to be bigger than it really is. In fact, the male Flying dragon lizard is only 195 mm in length, while the female is 212 mm. This measurement includes the length of its long tail which is approximately 114 mm on males and 132 mm on female. The flaps that allow them to glide, are brightly colored. The flying dragon lizard is usually yellow, blue, or red and sometimes it can be spotted or striped. The lower side of the wing is a different color depending on whether it is male and female. The Male's wing is blue, while the female is yellow. Scientists use this difference in order to identify gender.

The life of a flying dragon lizard is very interesting. As diurnal creatures, they are very active from 8:00-11:00 AM and again after 1:00 PM. They spend the majority of their time gliding from tree to tree in the canopy layer. Life in the trees helps them avoid their predators such as, snakes, eagles and other lizards. One male lizard lives with one to three female lizards. The male lizard is very territorial and will chase other males away from his trees. The draco lizards eat many types of insects, such as ants and termites. They make their way to the forest floor for their food and when it is time to have babies. The female leaves the tree only for food and laying her eggs. This usually happens in December-January. She digs a hole in the ground and lays one-five eggs. After covering the hole with dirt, she guards it for 24 hours and then returns to her tree, leaving her babies to their fate. It takes about 32 days for the eggs to hatch. Currently, no one really knows the life span of a flying dragon lizard.

The flying dragon lizard, like all animals, has many adaptations that help it survive in its environment. Originally these lizards did not have the ability to 'fly' but their bodies have adapted to allow them to glide. The dragon lizard has flaps that let it glide through trees and other objects. This

skill helps it survive because it allows it to escape from any predators and also find food to eat. The flying dragon lizard is smart and lives in the trees so it can easily escape from danger. Another physical adaptation is the long snout on the females. This helps them dig holes in the dirt to lay their eggs. The male lizard has different behaviors for warding off other lizards and attracting females. To make their bodies look bigger, they extend their wings. When attracting a mate, they move around their bodies and circle the females.

At the current time, the flying dragon lizard is listed as being Least Concern according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Part of the reason they are not in danger is because they live high in the trees when their predators are on the ground. However they are in danger because humans are destroying the rainforest and cutting down trees which is killing their habitat and could endanger them in the future. In Thailand people are making protected areas for the flying dragon lizard. If you do your part, we can ensure their safety for many years.