

# HAPPY WORLD LIZARD DAY

**14 August 2022**

**Did you know that South Africa is home to a dragon lizard species called Smaug?**



**They might not breathe fire but these dragon lizards, *Smaug giganteus*, are still quite impressive. Better known as giant girdled lizards or sungazers, as they raise their heads towards the sun, they can grow up to 40cm in length. Their entire body is covered in spiny scales which serve as protection from their predators. Endemic to South Africa, they live in shallow burrows in grassland areas. Smaugs were named after "the strong and wicked wyrm" from *The Hobbit*. Their species, like the dragon in the movie, are unfortunately vulnerable due to human activity. Many wildlife organisations are working tirelessly towards protecting one of South Africa's most unique lizard species.**

