

## FERAL ALERT

### ASIAN HOUSE GECKOS ON THE MOVE



**A**USTRALIA'S most successful invasive reptile species, the Asian House Gecko, *Hemidactylus frenatus*, is on the move. Originally from Indo-Malaysia, Indonesia and the Pacific islands, it is thought to have arrived in Darwin in the mid 1960s. They had reached Brisbane by 1983 and are now found as far south as northern coastal NSW. Sources are contradictory about whether they are in the Kimberley – current consensus is 'No'.

It is a moderate-sized gecko, about 10cm long, the back coloured grey or dark brown with black flecks and the underside whitish. It emerges at night to feed on the

insects attracted to lights - both outside and indoors. It has quite a loud call, roughly "chuck-chuck-chuck".

Until recently it was thought that in Australia these geckos only lived in association with humans and their buildings, however Dr Jessica Worthington Wilmer of the Queensland Museum believes they may be moving into bushland and thus affecting local native species.

It would be worthwhile for all northern readers to attempt to identify the geckos around your buildings. You might be surprised to find how many local species there are.