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ANGUIDS

Northern Alligator Lizard

Elgaria coerulea

Elgaria coerulea is a slender, long-tailed alligator lizard from the west coast and Rocky Mountains of North America, from southern British Columbia to the Sierra Nevada in California. It grows to 20-30 cm, is active by day and is adapted to cool, humid surroundings. It gives birth to live young and needs a cool enclosure with many hides and a cool winter rest.

Family: Anguidae Former name: *Gerrhonotus coeruleus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**20-30 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**80 × 40 × 50 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**15-24 °C**
Basking spot	**28-30 °C**
Temperature, night	**8-14 °C**
Humidity	**50-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 1
Winter rest	**4-8 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Litter size	**4-15 young**
Gestation	**60-120 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	*Elgaria coerulea* is a hardy lizard that does well in captivity when the temperature is low enough.
TEMPERATURE	The daytime temperature is 15-24 °C with a basking spot of 28-30 °C measured on the surface.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The humidity should be 50-80 %, highest near the moist end and at night. The species lives in cool, moist forests and along watercourses and does not thrive in dry air.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and basks briefly in sunny patches, so the enclosure needs a basking spot and weak UVB. A UVB tube of weak strength corresponding to Ferguson zone 1 over one half suits its way of life.
FEEDING	*Elgaria coerulea* eats a wide range of small animals: crickets, beetles, spiders, moths, slugs and worms. Larger animals also take small lizards and, rarely, newborn mice.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is secretive and hides under cover, but is also out in the open in the morning and evening. It is not an animal for handling. If it is grabbed, it bites hard and empties its bowels, and the tail is easily dropped.
NATIVE RANGE	Canada and United States.