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ANGUIDS

Southern Alligator Lizard

Elgaria multicarinata

Elgaria multicarinata is a robust, long-tailed lizard from the Pacific coast of North America, from Washington to northern Baja California. It grows to 20-40 cm, is active by day and at dusk, even at low temperatures, and eats anything it can overpower. It needs a cool enclosure with many hides and a cool winter period, and it is an animal to watch, not to handle.

Family: Anguidae Former name: *Gerrhonotus multicarinatus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**20-40 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**By day and at dusk**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**100 × 50 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**18-30 °C**
Basking spot	**30-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**12-16 °C**
Humidity	**40-70%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Winter rest	**6-10 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**18 months**
Clutch size	**5-20 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**50-55 days** at 24-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about keeping *Elgaria multicarinata*. The care below is based on the climate of the range, the habitat and the size.
TEMPERATURE	The daytime temperature in the enclosure is 18-30 °C with a basking spot of 30-35 °C measured on the surface.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The humidity should be 40-70 %, highest in the moist zone and at night. The species lives with dry summers, but always finds moist places under stones and wood, and in dry regions it is seen almost only near water.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and basks, so the enclosure needs a basking spot and UVB. A UVB tube of weak to moderate strength corresponding to Ferguson zone 2 over one half suits its way of life.
FEEDING	*Elgaria multicarinata* is a versatile predator that eats anything it can overpower: insects and other arthropods, snails, small lizards and small mammals and occasionally birds' eggs and nestlings. Movement triggers the capture.
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	United States and Mexico.