herpy

CAECILIANS

Taita African Caecilian

Boulengerula taitana

Boulengerula taitana is a small, limbless caecilian found only in the Taita Hills of south-eastern Kenya. The female lays a few eggs in a chamber in the soil and stays with them, and the newly hatched young feed on her outer layer of skin. The species is threatened, and almost nothing is known about keeping it in captivity.

Family: Herpelidae Former name: *Boulengerula taitanus; Afrocaecilia taitana*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**24-30 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Burrowing**
Habitat	**Montane forest**
Skin toxins	**None known**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**40 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**21-24 °C**
Temperature, night	**19-22 °C**
Humidity	**90-100%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Direct development (no larvae)**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Sexually mature	**24 months**
Eggs per season	**5**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Endangered (EN)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about keeping *Boulengerula taitana*. The climate in the Taita Hills is tropical but mild because of the altitude, with two rainy seasons, and the species lives in moist, loose soil.
TEMPERATURE	The soil temperature has not been measured for the species. 21-24 °C by day and 19-22 °C at night is an estimate that suits terrestrial caecilians and a mild mountain climate.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	The substrate must be evenly moist, and the air in the box is almost saturated, at 90-100 %.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The species does not need a water bowl or a water area. Condensation on the walls of the box is enough to drink from, and the water is used only to keep the substrate moist.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species lives underground and does not need UVB or any other lighting. The ordinary day-night rhythm of the room, with 10-14 hours of light, is enough. The box is kept dark and should not stand in direct sunlight.
FEEDING	In the wild, *Boulengerula taitana* eats mainly termites and earthworms; the young take mostly earthworms. In captivity, small earthworms are the most realistic staple food.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Boulengerula taitana* lives hidden underground, and a healthy animal lies buried most of the time. The species is kept singly, so that weight and health are easy to monitor.
NATIVE RANGE	Kenya.