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CAECILIANS

Koh Tao Caecilian

Ichthyophis kohtaoensis

Ichthyophis kohtaoensis is a burrowing caecilian from South-East Asia with a life in two parts: the adults live in damp soil, while the young hatch as aquatic larvae with external gills. The female lays the eggs in an earth burrow beside water and guards them. Little is known about the care of the species.

Family: Ichthyophiidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**30-40 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Burrowing**
Habitat	**Dry forest and rainforest**
Skin toxins	**None known**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**50 × 30 × 35 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**23-25 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-23 °C**
Humidity	**90-100%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Larvae in water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Eggs per season	**20-40**
Larval period	**120-240 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Small aquatic invertebrates (daphnia, mosquito larvae)**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Data Deficient (DD)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Little is known about the care of *Ichthyophis kohtaoensis*. The care advice is based on experience with burrowing caecilians of the same size that are kept in the same way, including *Geotrypetes seraphini*.

TEMPERATURE

Keep 23-25 °C by day and 21-23 °C at night. The temperature must be stable and vary by no more than about 3 °C; rapid and large fluctuations are poorly tolerated.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

The substrate must be evenly damp, but not so wet that water can be squeezed out of a handful, and there must never be standing water at the bottom of the box. The air in the box is as good as saturated with moisture (90-100 %).

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

The adults do not need a water bowl. They get water from the damp substrate and from condensation on the walls of the box, and a water bowl easily makes the substrate too wet.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species lives underground and does not need UVB or special lighting. A normal day-night rhythm in the room with 10-14 hours of light is enough. The box must not stand in direct sunlight.

FEEDING

Earthworms are the main food and are taken by almost all terrestrial caecilians. Use small to medium earthworms, for example compost worms, and cut them into pieces for juveniles. Put 10-15 worms in the box every other week.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Ichthyophis kohtaoensis lives hidden and spends almost all its time buried.

NATIVE RANGE

Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma) and Vietnam.