herpy

CAECILIANS

Aqua Ize Caecilian

Schistometopum thomense

Schistometopum thomense is a legless, burrowing caecilian that lives only on São Tomé and the small neighbouring island of Ilhéu das Rolas in the Gulf of Guinea. It is often bright yellow, gives birth to live, fully developed young and is one of the few caecilians that have been bred in captivity. Its care is all about deep, damp soil free of fertiliser and pesticides.

Family: Dermophiidae

Mild skin toxins

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**20-34 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**By day and at night**
Lifestyle	**Burrowing**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Skin toxins	**Mild** Wash your hands after contact and keep your fingers away from your eyes and mouth
Difficulty	**Experienced**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Development	**Live-bearing**
Sexually mature	**24 months**
Litter size	**1-16 young**
Parental care	**None**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**50 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**21-24 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-22 °C**
Humidity	**85-100%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in groups**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	The species is terrestrial and burrows, so its care is all about the soil. It is kept and bred in small numbers, and the care is based on the species itself and on other terrestrial caecilians.
TEMPERATURE	The daytime temperature is 21-24 °C and the night temperature 20-22 °C, which corresponds to the soil in the species' mountain forests. Heating is usually not necessary in a room with a stable temperature.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Air humidity in the box is 85-100 %, because the soil is damp. Moisture is maintained by misting the soil and occasionally turning over the top few centimetres.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The species does not need a water bowl or an aquatic area. Moisture comes from the soil, and condensation on the walls of the box is enough to drink from. It swims very clumsily, and deep water is a drowning hazard.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is active both day and night and at first often shows itself on the surface; after a few weeks of acclimatisation it is seen less often.
FEEDING	Earthworms are the staple, and waxworms are also taken. An adult is given 10-15 small earthworms every other week. Dig through the soil regularly: many worms left over mean overfeeding or an animal that is not eating.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*S. thomense* digs extensive tunnel systems. In the wild several animals lie together in the same tree stump.
NATIVE RANGE	São Tomé & Príncipe.