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GECKOS

African whole-toed gecko

Holodactylus africanus

A small, nocturnal ground gecko from the dry regions of eastern Africa with large eyes and movable eyelids, long claws on the toes and a thick, short tail in which it stores fat. It digs its own hiding places and feeds mainly on termites. The species is rare in vivaria, and there are few published accounts of its care.

Family: Eublepharidae Former name: *Holodactylus aculeatus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**6-11 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and savanna**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 40 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**27-30 °C**
Basking spot	**33-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-20 °C**
Humidity	**30-40%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Incubation	**45-60 days** at 26-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
One adult needs a low enclosure of at least 60 × 40 × 30 cm (length × width × height), and larger is better. A small breeding group of one male and two females needs at least 90 cm in length and more floor area.

TEMPERATURE
By day the enclosure should be 27-30 °C with a warm spot of around 33-35 °C under a low heat lamp at one end. The other end should be cooler, so that the animal can choose for itself.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
The humidity in the enclosure itself should be low, about 30-40 % by day, so that the surface of the substrate is dry. The moisture instead comes from the humid hide, where the animal can rest and shed.

LIGHTING AND UVB
The species is nocturnal and hides for most of the day. A fixed daily rhythm with around 12-14 hours of light in summer and 10-12 hours in winter is a good framework.

FEEDING
In the wild, *Holodactylus africanus* lives mainly on termites, supplemented with beetles, spiders and other small arthropods.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
It is a calm but bite-prone species that prefers to be left in peace. The bite can be strong, and the animal can hold on. It is not dangerous, but it hurts, and the wound should be washed.

NATIVE RANGE
Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania.