herpy

GECKOS

Box-patterned gecko

Lucasium steindachneri

Lucasium steindachneri is a small, ground-dwelling gecko from the interior of eastern Australia with a pale stripe down the back, broken by dark brown blotches. It is nocturnal, feeds on small arthropods and is easy to keep in a small, dry enclosure, but it is rare outside Australia.

Family: Diplodactylidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**4-6 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-8 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and savanna**
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**40 × 30 × 25 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Basking spot	**28-30 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-20 °C**
Humidity	**30-50%**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**12-18 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Incubation	**56-75 days** at 27-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Lucasium steindachneri needs the same care as the ground-dwelling Australian geckos of the genus *Diplodactylus*, to which it was formerly assigned, and as *Lucasium damaeum*.

TEMPERATURE

A heat mat or heat tape under one end, controlled by a thermostat, should give 28-30 °C on part of the floor in summer. The rest is kept at 22-26 °C during the day.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Lucasium steindachneri does not need high humidity. Ordinary room air at 30-50 % is enough. Fill one of the hides with slightly damp sphagnum or damp sand, so that the animal can shed its skin.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Lucasium steindachneri is nocturnal and does not need UVB or any special lighting, so UVB is optional. Let the daylight in the room set the daily rhythm, or use a timer of 10-12 hours in summer and shorter days in winter.

FEEDING

In the wild, *Lucasium steindachneri* eats various arthropods such as insects, spiders and scorpions. In the enclosure it takes crickets, cockroaches, termites, flies, moths and waxworms.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Lucasium steindachneri is quiet and withdrawn. By day it sleeps in its hide and becomes active as darkness falls. Handling is unnecessary and should be rare and brief; a startled animal may hiss and lunge.

NATIVE RANGE

Australia.