herpy

GECKOS

Smooth knob-tailed gecko

Nephrurus levis

Nephrurus levis is a plump, nocturnal desert gecko from inland Australia with a huge head, large eyes and a short tail ending in a small knob. It digs its own burrows in the sand, is placid, and does well in a sand-based enclosure with a warm end and a humid hide.

Family: Carphodactylidae Former name: *Nephrurus laevis; Nephrurus platyurus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**9-12 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert and semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**50 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**21-25 °C**
Basking spot	**30-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-20 °C**
Humidity	**30-50%**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**24-36 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Clutches per year	**6-9**
Incubation	**65-80 days** at 27-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix III**
EU annex	**Annex C**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult can be kept in an enclosure of at least 50 × 30 × 30 cm (length × width × height), but bigger is better, and floor area matters more than height. The species is best kept singly, because several animals together may fight.

TEMPERATURE

The species needs a clear difference between a warm end and a cool end. Place a heat mat under one end, or use a low-output ceramic heater, so that the surface there reaches 30-32 °C. Keep the cool end at 21-25 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Although the species comes from dry regions, it cannot do without moisture, because the burrows underground are more humid than the air above.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is nocturnal and does not need bright light, and powerful spotlights stress it. Usually only heat is provided, and the daylight in the room sets the daily rhythm.

FEEDING

The gecko lives on insects and is not fussy. Offer crickets, dubia roaches and small locusts, and now and then waxworms or mealworms for variety. A meal is typically 4-5 insects smaller than the animal's head.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The gecko is calm and placid, but shy when new. It becomes active after dark and spends most of the day in its hide.

NATIVE RANGE

Australia.