herpy

GECKOS

Yellow-headed day gecko

Phelsuma klemmeri

A small, luminous day gecko with a turquoise back and yellow head that lives in bamboo forest on a tiny patch of north-western Madagascar. It is threatened in the wild, but well established in captivity and relatively easy to breed, and it is a splendid animal to observe rather than handle.

Family: Gekkonidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**8-10 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**8-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**30 × 30 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**25-28 °C**
Basking spot	**30-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-23 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, fruit, nectar and complete diet**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**6-8 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Incubation	**40-60 days** at 27-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Endangered (EN)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

A pair can live in a tall enclosure of at least 30 × 30 × 45 cm (length × width × height), and one male with two or three females needs at least 45 × 45 × 60 cm.

TEMPERATURE

During the day the enclosure should be 25-28 °C, with a small basking spot of 30-32 °C under a halogen spot, where the gecko can warm up. Let the animal choose between the basking spot and the cooler parts of the enclosure.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity should average 60-80 %, measured in the middle of the enclosure. Mist thoroughly in the morning and again in the late afternoon, so that leaves and panes are covered in droplets.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and needs UVB. Use a T5 tube of a strength and distance that gives a UV index of 3-4 at the uppermost perches (Ferguson zone 3), and preferably measure with a UV index meter.

FEEDING

The gecko eats both small insects and sweet things. Offer small live insects such as fruit flies, newly hatched crickets and small houseflies, dusted with calcium with D3.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The gecko is shy and fast and is poorly suited to handling. If it has to be moved, coax it into a container rather than grabbing it, because the tail is easily dropped, and the skin is thin and delicate.

NATIVE RANGE

Madagascar.