herpy

GECKOS

Ornate day gecko

Phelsuma ornata

Phelsuma ornata is a small, fast day gecko from Mauritius and the surrounding islands, with a blue-green body, red dots on the back and a turquoise tail with red crossbands. It feeds on insects, nectar and soft fruit, does best in a tall, densely planted enclosure, and is more an animal to watch than to handle.

Family: Gekkonidae Former name: *Phelsuma ornatum; Phelsuma vinsoni*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**10-13 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-12 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and rock-dwelling**
Habitat	**Dry forest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**30 × 30 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-28 °C**
Basking spot	**31-33 °C**
Temperature, night	**20 °C**
Humidity	**50-90%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects, fruit, nectar and complete diet**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**6-12 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Incubation	**40-85 days** at 26-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

A single adult *Phelsuma ornata* can live in a tall enclosure of at least 30 × 30 × 45 cm (length × width × height), but bigger is always better, because the species is very active.

TEMPERATURE

For *Phelsuma ornata* the enclosure should be 26-28 °C during the day, and at night the temperature falls to about 20 °C. A small hot spot under a lamp should be 31-33 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The humidity should fluctuate over the day. By day it is kept at about 50-60 %, and at night it rises to 80-90 %. Mist the enclosure thoroughly in the evening, and let it dry out to about 50 % before you mist again.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Phelsuma ornata is diurnal, and light is important for both colours and calcium metabolism.

FEEDING

In the wild, *Phelsuma ornata* eats insects and other invertebrates as well as nectar, pollen and soft fruit. In captivity, a mixture of live insects and a ready-made food for fruit-eating geckos works as the staple diet.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Phelsuma ornata is fast and shy in captivity. In time it can get used to you and stay in view when you stand by the enclosure, but it should not be handled.

NATIVE RANGE

Mauritius.