herpy

GECKOS

Southern leaf-tailed gecko

Phyllurus platurus

Phyllurus platurus is a brown, marbled, nocturnal leaf-tailed gecko from the sandstone cliffs around Sydney. The broad, leaf-shaped tail and the camouflage make it vanish against rock and bark. It reaches only about 15 cm, is calm to keep and needs a cold winter rest in order to breed.

Family: Carphodactylidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**15 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and rock-dwelling**
Habitat	**Rocky terrain and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**50 × 50 × 50 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**19-21 °C**
Humidity	**55-100%**
UVB	**Optional**
Winter rest	**10-16 °C** 9-13 weeks
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**In pairs or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**18 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Clutches per year	**2-4**
Incubation	**56-110 days** at 21-22 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	A pair of adults can be kept in an enclosure of about 50 × 50 × 50 cm (length × width × height), and bigger is better.
TEMPERATURE	*Phyllurus platurus* thrives at ordinary room temperature. By day the temperature should be 22-26 °C, and at night it may fall to about 19-21 °C. There is no documented need for a warm hotspot. Winter is important for breeding.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Mist the enclosure every evening with lukewarm water. Right after misting the humidity is close to 100 %, but between mistings it should fall to about 55-60 %, so that the enclosure can dry out.
LIGHTING AND UVB	There are no documented UVB requirements for the species. It is nocturnal and hides in crevices by day, so it receives only little light in the wild.
FEEDING	*Phyllurus platurus* takes live insects. The hunting strategy is ambush, so the prey must move. Crickets can be used as a staple diet; in the wild it is spiders, moths, beetles and cockroaches.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is quiet and steadfast and often sits motionless and well camouflaged. It is not an animal to be handled much. Never grab the tail, because it is dropped, and the new tail becomes smoother and less characteristic.
NATIVE RANGE	Australia.