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GECKOS

New Caledonian giant gecko

Rhacodactylus leachianus

The largest living gecko in the world, a heavy, nocturnal tree-climber from the forests of New Caledonia. It can grow to more than 40 cm in length and live for more than 20 years. It is calm and curious, but needs a large, tall enclosure and a keeper who is ready for a long life together with it.

Family: Diplodactylidae Former name: *Rhacodactylus aubryanus; Rhacodactylus leachianus henkeli*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**23-43 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**150-500 g**
Lifespan	**20-30 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest and montane forest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 45 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-27 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**50-80%**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Insects, fruit, complete diet and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**36-60 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Clutches per year	**2-4**
Incubation	**45-150 days** at 22-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult needs a tall enclosure of at least 60 × 45 × 90 cm (length × width × height). A smaller enclosure is too cramped for an animal of 40 cm and several hundred grams, and a roomy home gives a calmer animal.

TEMPERATURE

Rhacodactylus leachianus does best at ordinary room temperature. During the day 22-27 °C is suitable, and at night it may fall to 18-22 °C. The nightly cooling corresponds to conditions in the wild and keeps the animal active.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The humidity should be 50-80%. Mist the enclosure every evening so that the humidity rises to 70-80%, and let it fall again during the day so the substrate and branches have time to dry out.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is nocturnal and can live without UVB when it gets vitamin D3 through its food. Light is often needed only for the sake of the plants. If a low-level UVB tube is offered, however, the animals often use it.

FEEDING

The staple diet is a prepared powdered diet for fruit-eating geckos, mixed with water into a thick paste and served in a dish, preferably on a holder high up. Pangea and Repashy are widespread brands.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Rhacodactylus leachianus is calm and can become tame, but it is not a pet to be handled every day. It can bite when frightened, and a bite from a large animal hurts and can bleed.

NATIVE RANGE

New Caledonia.