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GECKOS

Southern Leaf-tailed Gecko

Saltuarius swaini

Saltuarius swaini is a large, nocturnal leaf-tailed gecko from the rainforests of the coastal mountains of south-eastern Queensland and northern New South Wales in Australia. The skin resembles lichen-covered bark, the tail is broad and leaf-shaped, and the toes have claws instead of adhesive lamellae. The species is almost unknown in terrariums and must be kept cool.

Family: Carphodactylidae English name: Southern leaf-tailed gecko Former name: *Phyllurus swaini*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**13 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest and montane forest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 40 × 80 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**19-21 °C**
Humidity	**55-100%**
UVB	**Not required**
Winter rest	**10-16 °C** 9-13 weeks
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**24-48 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Clutches per year	**2-3**
Incubation	**90-110 days** at 22-26 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about keeping *Saltuarius swaini*. The figures are borrowed from *Saltuarius salebrosus*, *Saltuarius cornutus* and *Phyllurus platurus*, which live in similar forest and are better known in captivity.
TEMPERATURE	By day the temperature should be 22-26 °C and at night 19-21 °C. The species comes from cool mountain forest, so stay at the low end of the range. Heat is the greatest danger.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should fluctuate.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is nocturnal and hidden by day, so UVB is not necessary for *Saltuarius swaini*. A weak light during the day with a fixed daily rhythm is natural.
FEEDING	The species feeds on arthropods, and in terrariums ordinary feeder insects such as crickets and cockroaches work. Hunting is by ambush, so the prey must move.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Saltuarius swaini* is a calm, secretive and nocturnal species that sits still against bark by day. It is not an animal to be handled, and it is easily stressed by being picked up.
NATIVE RANGE	Australia.