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GECKOS

Anderson's short-fingered gecko

Stenodactylus petrii

A small, sand-coloured desert gecko with large eyes and a thin, whip-like tail, which runs and burrows on the sand dunes of North Africa and southern Israel. It is nocturnal and wants warmth, relatively dry air, a humid hide and a cool winter rest. It is rare in the trade.

Family: Gekkonidae Former name: *Stenodactylus elimensis*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**9-11 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**6-10 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 40 × 20 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**24-29 °C**
Basking spot	**32-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-24 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Incubation	**60-80 days** at 28-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Floor area matters more than height, because this gecko lives on the ground. A pair of *Stenodactylus petrii* needs at least 60 × 40 × 20 cm (length × width × height), and a plastic box will do perfectly well.

TEMPERATURE

Keep 24-29 °C by day with a small hot spot of 32-35 °C at one end, measured on the sand. Keep the hot spot mild, because drying out is the greatest danger for this species.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The air may be relatively dry, around 40-60%. Spray part of the enclosure 1-2 times a week in the evening, so the animals can drink the droplets. Spraying just before they come out often gets them to eat.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The gecko is nocturnal and hides from the light by day, but it needs a fixed daily rhythm.

FEEDING

The species lives on small insects. The staple diet is crickets, and for variety you can give mini mealworms, small waxworms and flightless fruit flies.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

By day the gecko stays hidden, but at night it is active and curious. In small groups the animals chase each other, dig tunnels under stones and pieces of wood, and come to the glass when something happens in the room.

NATIVE RANGE

Morocco, Western Sahara, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Sudan, Eritrea, Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal.