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GECKOS

Moorish gecko

Tarentola mauritanica

A stocky gecko from the rocks and house walls of the Mediterranean, with a back armoured with pointed tubercular scales and large eyes with vertical pupils. It is hardy and lives on insects, but does not become sexually mature until after several years and needs a cool winter rest to breed.

Family: Phyllodactylidae Former name: *Lacerta mauritanica; Platydactylus mauritanicus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**12-16 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**8-12 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and rock-dwelling**
Habitat	**Rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 45 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**30-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-20 °C**
Humidity	**50-60%**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**36-60 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-6**
Incubation	**55-98 days** at 27-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	The gecko is a climber, so height and vertical surfaces matter more than floor area.
TEMPERATURE	By day the enclosure should be 25-30 °C and at night about 18-20 °C. Give the animal a warm spot of 30-35 °C under a lamp, so that it can choose for itself how warm it wants to be. There must always be a cool end.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The species comes from dry to semi-arid regions and manages with a moderate humidity of about 50-60%.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Tarentola mauritanica* is most active in the evening and at night, but also basks in the wild, so a weak UVB light is recommended.
FEEDING	The species is an insectivore and in the wild takes beetles, spiders, ants, butterflies and caterpillars. In the enclosure you can give crickets, small cockroaches, locusts and occasionally waxworms or mealworms as a treat.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Tarentola mauritanica* is vigilant and not an animal to be picked up for fun. It can get used to your being there, but handling stresses it, and it drops its tail if it feels threatened.
NATIVE RANGE	Portugal, Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Morocco, Western Sahara, Algeria and Tunisia.