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GECKOS

Turnip-tailed gecko

Thecadactylus rapicauda

One of the largest geckos in the Americas: a nocturnal ambush hunter with no movable eyelids, vertical pupils, a blue tongue and a tail that grows back thick as a turnip after a loss. The species is widespread from Mexico to Brazil, but is rare in vivaria, and little reliable information on care exists.

Family: Phyllodactylidae Former name: *Gekko rapicauda; Gekko laevis; Platydactylus theconyx*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**9-13 cm** snout-vent length
Weight	**16-40 g**
Lifespan	**8-12 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Dry forest and rainforest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 45 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-28 °C**
Basking spot	**30-31 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-24 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Incubation	**150-200 days** at 24-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
A single animal needs an enclosure of at least 60 × 45 × 90 cm (length × width × height), and a pair at least 70 × 70 × 90 cm.

TEMPERATURE
The species is active within a relatively narrow temperature range. By day there should be 25-28 °C with a slightly warmer spot of 30-31 °C at the top of the enclosure, and at night 21-24 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
The species needs high humidity. Keep it at 60-80 %: the humidity rises after a misting in the evening and falls during the day. Let the substrate dry out a little between mistings, so that mould does not develop.

LIGHTING AND UVB
The species is nocturnal and hides in dark crevices by day, so UVB is not necessary when the food is given calcium and vitamin D3.

FEEDING
In the wild the species is an ambush hunter with a very broad diet.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
The animal is slow and deliberate when not threatened, but can be quick and aggressive when disturbed. It can bite hard, and it sheds the tail under even slight pressure.

NATIVE RANGE
Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, Brazil, Trinidad & Tobago, Aruba, Curaçao, Caribbean Netherlands, Antigua & Barbuda, St Lucia and Grenada.