herpy

LACERTIDS

Four-lined Tegu

Tupinambis quadrilineatus

Tupinambis quadrilineatus is a medium-sized, diurnal tegu from the Cerrado savannas of central Brazil, recognised by the four long longitudinal stripes along the body. Its care is almost undocumented, and the species is rare in trade. The figures in the guide are borrowed from relatives in *Tupinambis* and *Salvator*: a large, warm enclosure with a deep substrate, UVB and an experienced keeper.

Family: Teiidae Former name: *Tupinambis cerradensis*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**23-27 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Savanna**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**180 × 90 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-35 °C**
Basking spot	**40-55 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**60-75%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**4-32 eggs**
Incubation	**150-180 days** at 28-32 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

About the species

Tupinambis quadrilineatus is a tegu of the genus *Tupinambis*, which is now separated from the southern tegus in the genus *Salvator*. The species differs from the others in having 11-18 femoral pores, 94-118 scales around the middle of the body and, above all, in its colour: a distinct pale stripe along each side of the body, which is indistinct or absent in the others. The name means "four lines", but the stripes can be hard to see in some animals.

Adults measure 23-27 cm snout-vent length, making the species one of the smaller tegus, about the size of *Tupinambis teguixin*. Total length and weight are not documented.

The species was described in 1997. Almost simultaneously it was described a second time under the name *Tupinambis cerradensis*, which is now a synonym. It lives side by side with *Salvator merianae* in several places but is less well known than they are. Almost no information exists on its behaviour, growth or temperament, and animals of the species are rarely seen in trade.

Distribution and habitat

Tupinambis quadrilineatus lives in the Cerrado biome of central Brazil: in Mato Grosso, Goiás, Tocantins, Minas Gerais, Distrito Federal, south-eastern Pará, Maranhão and Piauí. The type locality is Rosário Oeste in Mato Grosso, and finds in Maranhão and Piauí have extended the range northwards. In the transition zone between the Cerrado and the Amazon, the species occurs in semi-deciduous forest.

The species probably also occurs in Bolivia, but this is not confirmed, and the country is therefore not on the map.

> **Native range:** Brazil.

HABITAT

Tupinambis quadrilineatus occurs in Cerrado savanna, in forest patches within the Cerrado and in the transition zone to the Amazon, where the forest is semi-deciduous. It also occurs near small streams in open savanna. The Cerrado has distinct seasons with a wet season and a dry season.

What the species eats, where it sleeps, and whether it digs or uses other animals' burrows is not documented. The relatives in *Tupinambis* and *Salvator* are omnivorous but eat a lot of animal food, and they dig. Winter dormancy is not documented for the species; *Salvator merianae* in southern South America goes through winter dormancy, but that is a species from a cooler region.

Read more: Brumation and the seasons

Care

THE ENCLOSURE

Almost nothing is known about the care of *Tupinambis quadrilineatus*, and captive breeding is not documented. The climate of its range is warm and savanna-like with a distinct wet and dry season. All figures below are borrowed from *Tupinambis teguixin* and the other tegus and are estimates. The species should be kept only by an experienced keeper who can read the animal's signals and is ready to adjust.

An adult needs an enclosure of at least 180 × 90 × 90 cm (length × width × height); larger is better. A tegu needs an enclosure length of at least six times its snout-vent length and three times in width and height. For a species of up to 27 cm, that gives about 160 × 80 × 80 cm, and the size in the box gives a little more space, as for *Tupinambis teguixin*. The enclosure is typically custom-built, with a front opening, good ventilation and a lock, because the animal is strong and clever.

The substrate must be deep: at least 20 cm of fertiliser-free garden soil mixed with coconut fibre or cypress bark, preferably with leaf litter on top, so the animal can dig. Avoid pine and cedar shavings. Provide flat stones as a basking area, hides at both ends and a large hide that the animal can go right into. Remove droppings daily, and replace the whole substrate a couple of times a year. A large, stable water tub is a must. The animal is kept alone.

Read more: Buying animals: captive-bred, wild-caught and transport

TEMPERATURE

The basking spot should have a surface temperature of 40-55 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer. The warm end of the enclosure is 32-35 °C and the cool end 24-29 °C. At night the light and heat are switched off, and the temperature falls to 20-24 °C.

The species is a sun lover, and an active animal in the wild has a body temperature of around 37 °C.

Use several halogen spots close together over the basking area, so that the whole body is warmed evenly, and shield them with a guard so the animal cannot reach the bulbs. Ceramic heaters and red or blue bulbs are not suitable. The animal must always be able to move away from the heat. All figures are borrowed from *T. teguixin* and the other tegus.

Winter dormancy is not documented for the species, and the dry season of the Cerrado is mild. Animals kept too cold digest poorly and lose their appetite.

Read more: Heat and temperature

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity is set at 60-75 %, an estimate based on the savanna climate, which is drier than that of the rainforest; the tegus from the Amazon are kept at 70-85 %. Keep the substrate damp but not wet, with a humid burrow for the animal, and mist the enclosure daily. A large water tub that the animal can lie in must always be freely available and clean. Tegus drag substrate into the water and often leave droppings in it.

Whether *Tupinambis quadrilineatus* itself likes to bathe is not documented.

Read more: Humidity, misting and ventilation

LIGHTING AND UVB

Tupinambis quadrilineatus is diurnal and needs strong light and UVB for 12 hours a day. Tegus belong to Ferguson Zone 3, and the figure is borrowed from the relatives. Use a 10-12 % T5 HO tube in a fitting with a reflector over the basking area. With the tube inside the enclosure, the distance to the animal's back is typically 43-53 cm, and it must be adjusted if the tube is behind mesh. The UV index at the basking spot should be 3-4, and lower in the rest of the enclosure. Check with a UV meter, and replace the tubes according to the manufacturer's instructions.

A powerful LED or T5 daylight fitting gives a bright enclosure in addition to the heat lamps.

Read more: Lighting and UVB

FEEDING

What *Tupinambis quadrilineatus* eats in the wild is not documented. The species of the genus live on a broad diet, mostly animal food, and the figures here are borrowed from them. Offer a varied diet of insects (crickets, cockroaches, locusts, mealworms), snails, whole prey such as thawed mice, rats, chicks and quail, boiled eggs and lean meat. Greens and a little fruit can be included to a small extent. Stick to a diet of about 90 % animal food and 10 % greens.

Juveniles up to 6 months are fed 5 times a week, 7-12 months 4 times, 1-2 years 3 times and adults 2 times a week. A portion should not be larger than the animal's skull. Watch the amount, because tegus easily become overweight. Dust insects and meat with calcium; whole prey need no supplement. Do not give raw eggs or fish without boiling them first, and never live rodents.

Read more: Feeder animals: keeping and breeding Read more: Calcium, vitamins and supplements

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

No information exists on the temperament of *Tupinambis quadrilineatus*. The related tegus from the Amazon are more defensive than the southern species, and it is wisest to assume the same: the animal may bite, lash with its tail and scratch if it feels threatened, and a bite from a large tegu can cause deep wounds.

Stay calm around the animal, approach from the side, and avoid sudden movements and grabbing from above. Never grab the tail. Give newly acquired animals a few weeks in peace. Keep the animal alone; male tegus are territorial. Reptiles can carry *Salmonella*, so wash your hands after any contact, and do not let small children touch the animal unsupervised.

Read more: Quarantine and hygiene

Breeding

SEXUAL MATURITY AND SEXING

Age and size at sexual maturity and sex differences are not documented for *Tupinambis quadrilineatus*. In tegus in general, males are larger than females and have a broader head.

MATING

Mating is not documented for *Tupinambis quadrilineatus*, and captive breeding is unknown. In the closely related tegus, the male follows a receptive female and guards her against other males; the mating itself is violent, and the male bites hold of the female's neck. What triggers mating in captivity, and whether the species has a particular mating season, is not documented.

EGG-LAYING AND CLUTCHES

The species is egg-laying (the clutch size in the box, 4-32 eggs, is borrowed from *Tupinambis teguixin*), but the number of clutches per year and the nesting site are not documented. A female tegu that is about to lay needs a deep, moist substrate or a large, closed laying box with moist soil that she can dig in; without a suitable site she may retain the eggs, which is life-threatening.

INCUBATION

Incubation time and temperature are not documented for *Tupinambis quadrilineatus*. The figures in the box, 150-180 days at 28-32 °C, are borrowed from *Tupinambis teguixin*, whose eggs in the wild lie in a termite mound until the rains come, and the temperature is an estimate based on the tropical climate. Use a closed container with damp vermiculite or perlite and a small air hole, and leave the eggs undisturbed. The eggs must not get wet.

Read more: Incubating eggs

REARING THE YOUNG

No information exists on rearing *Tupinambis quadrilineatus*, and the young have not been described. In other tegus the young fend for themselves from the start and are shyer than adults. They need an enclosure with a deep, damp substrate, plenty of hides, UVB and high heat, and are fed small insects dusted with calcium.

Be prepared for the young to grow quickly, and for the large enclosure to be ready when they have outgrown the first one.

Health and common mistakes

No information exists on disease in *Tupinambis quadrilineatus*. The problems known from tegus in general are most often caused by faults in care.

- Obesity from too much fatty food and too little exercise.
- Metabolic bone disease from too little UVB and calcium.
- Respiratory infections from too low a temperature and a wet substrate without heat.
- Intestinal worms and mites in wild-caught animals. Quarantine new animals, and have a faecal sample examined.
- Egg-laying difficulties in females without a suitable place to dig.

A healthy animal has clear eyes, a full tail base, smooth skin and regular digestion. Animals that lose weight, do not eat or breathe with their mouth open need to see a vet with experience of reptiles.

Read more: Common diseases and signs of illness

Always ask someone who knows

This guide is a good place to start, but it cannot replace experience. Animals differ, and much of what matters most is learned from people who have kept the species for years. Talk to a breeder, an experienced keeper or a vet who knows reptiles and amphibians before you get the animal - and again if anything looks wrong.