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LACERTIDS

European Common Lizard

Zootoca vivipara

Zootoca vivipara is a small, diurnal lizard that lives further north than any other reptile. The species reaches about 15 cm and is found on bogs, heaths, woodland edges and meadows. Over most of its range the female gives birth to live young. It needs a cool, sunny, humid enclosure with plenty of hides and a brumation of three to four months.

Family: Lacertidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**12-16 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**2-5 g**
Lifespan	**5-12 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Wetland and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**80 × 50 × 50 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**22-28 °C**
Basking spot	**32-38 °C**
Temperature, night	**14-18 °C**
Humidity	**50-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Winter rest	**4-6 °C** 12-16 weeks
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**In pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Sexually mature	**12-36 months**
Litter size	**2-12 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Gestation	**35-85 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Zootoca vivipara does best outdoors in an enclosure or a closed garden bed in full sun with shady, cool zones.

TEMPERATURE

Zootoca vivipara is a species from cold regions, but it basks a lot and keeps its body temperature at around 30-33 °C when active.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Zootoca vivipara lives in damp areas, and the humidity in the enclosure is 50-60 % by day and 70-80 % at night. There should be a drier and a damper zone so that the lizard can choose for itself.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Zootoca vivipara is diurnal and basks a lot, so it needs sunlight or UVB. Outdoors, UVB comes from the sun. Indoors, use a UVB tube over the basking spot so that the UV index is about 1-3 at the lizard's head.

FEEDING

Zootoca vivipara is an insectivore. In the wild the diet consists of flies, spiders, caterpillars, aphids and other small arthropods, and females eat more than males. The lizard eats mostly on sunny days.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Zootoca vivipara is a shy, fast and watchful animal. Males are territorial towards other males and can bite the female in the mating season.

NATIVE RANGE

Ireland, United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Spain, Andorra, Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, China and Japan.