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SKINKS

Ocellated (Bronze) Skink

Chalcides ocellatus

Chalcides ocellatus is a lively, diurnal skink from the Mediterranean region, North Africa and the Middle East with a smooth, cylindrical body, small legs and pale-edged eyespots on the back. It swims through loose sand, gives birth to live young and is inquisitive and easy to watch. It does well in a dry enclosure with a sandy substrate, a warm basking spot and humid nights.

Family: Scincidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**15-30 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**22-39 g**
Lifespan	**10-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert and semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**90 × 45 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-29 °C**
Basking spot	**33-37 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-21 °C**
Humidity	**15-35%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects and small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**Singly or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Litter size	**2-12 young**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
Gestation	**90-120 days**

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 90 × 45 × 30 cm, and larger is better. Floor area matters more than height, because the species mostly moves on the ground, but it also climbs, so branches and rocks give variety.

TEMPERATURE

Chalcides ocellatus loves the sun and needs a clear temperature gradient. The basking spot should have a surface temperature of 43-49 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer, and the air temperature above it should be 33-37 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity should follow the rhythm of nature: dry by day and humid at night. By day the enclosure should dry out to 15-35 %, and at night it may rise to 90-100 %.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and needs strong light and UVB. It belongs to Ferguson zone 2, and the UV index should be 2-3 at the basking spot and lower in the rest of the enclosure.

FEEDING

The species is first and foremost an insectivore and in the wild takes almost anything it can overpower: locusts, crickets, ants, beetles, woodlice, spiders, centipedes and insect larvae.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Chalcides ocellatus is active and inquisitive, but not an animal for regular handling: it is slippery and fast and disappears easily if it becomes frightened.

NATIVE RANGE

Italy, Malta, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Palestinian Territories, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Niger, Mali, Sudan and Chad.