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SKINKS

Algerian orange-tailed skink

Eumeces algeriensis

A large, sturdy skink from Morocco and Algeria with a brown ground colour and pale crossbands with reddish eyespots. *Eumeces algeriensis* burrows into dry soil, needs sun, UVB and a deep substrate, and is often confused with *Eumeces schneiderii*.

Family: Scincidae Former name: *Eumeces schneideri algeriensis; Novoeumeces algeriensis*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**30-45 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**24-30 °C**
Basking spot	**38-45 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-24 °C**
Humidity	**20-40%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, plants and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**5-15 eggs**
Incubation	**40-60 days** at 28-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Eumeces algeriensis lives on the ground and burrows, so floor area and substrate matter most. Two animals need at least 120 × 60 × 45 cm (length × width × height); a single animal can be kept in 90 × 45 × 40 cm.

TEMPERATURE

The enclosure needs a clear gradient. By day the temperature should be 24-30 °C, coolest at one end and warmest near the basking spot.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The species comes from dry regions and must be kept dry: the humidity should stay below 40 %. Mist lightly once a day if the air is very dry, and twice a day when a shed is approaching and the skin looks dull.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and needs UVB for as long as the light is on. It is placed in Ferguson zone 3; the figure is borrowed from *Eumeces schneiderii*.

FEEDING

Eumeces algeriensis is omnivorous but feeds mainly on insects: crickets, cockroaches, mealworms, silkworms, waxworms and hornworms, as well as snails and earthworms.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is less sociable than *E. schneiderii*. It can be kept singly, as a pair or as two females, but never two males together. The enclosure needs several hides and basking spots. New animals are often wary.

NATIVE RANGE

Morocco and Algeria.