herpy

SKINKS

Bali sun skink

Eutropis multifasciata

A fast, diurnal skink from forest edges and clearings in South-East Asia. *Eutropis multifasciata* has a bronze-brown back, hunts insects in the leaf litter and gives birth to live young. It requires warmth, high humidity, UVB and a spacious enclosure with a loose substrate.

Family: Scincidae English name: Bali Sun Skink Former name: *Mabuya multifasciata; Scincus multifasciatus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**25-33 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**8-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**27-32 °C**
Basking spot	**35-41 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-25 °C**
Humidity	**70-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects and fruit**
Kept	**In pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Sexually mature	**11-12 months**
Litter size	**2-10 young**
Gestation	**60-90 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

About the species

Eutropis multifasciata is a slender, smooth and fast skink with short legs, a pointed snout and a long, thin tail. The back is bronze-brown with three keels on each dorsal scale, and the sides are dark, yellow or red-orange. The throat is white to yellow. The body from snout to vent is up to 14 cm, and the total length is about 25-33 cm.

The species is fast and shy and climbs well. Its appearance varies with the area of distribution, and older names such as *Mabuya multifasciata* still turn up in the trade.

Distribution and habitat

Eutropis multifasciata has a very large range in South-East Asia: from India (Assam and the Nicobar Islands), Bangladesh and southern China to Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia (including Sumatra, Java, Bali, Borneo and Sulawesi), Brunei, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines.

The species has been introduced to Florida and to southern Taiwan, where it has spread in the lowlands and is regarded as invasive. These populations are not part of the native range. In its natural range the species is common.

> **Native range:** India, Bangladesh, China, Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Philippines.

HABITAT

The species lives in primary and secondary forest, forest edges, clearings, plantations and gardens in the lowlands. It lives on the ground in the leaf litter, on fallen trunks and rock outcrops and climbs well. The animals are diurnal and bask in the morning; they hunt actively and eat arthropods such as beetles, grasshoppers, spiders and ants, and occasionally snails and small lizards.

The climate is tropical with small variations in temperature throughout the year. Active animals have a body temperature of about 31-34 °C. The species tolerates little cold, and reproduction follows the rainy season more than the temperature.

Care

THE ENCLOSURE

Eutropis multifasciata is active and requires space. A single animal can be kept in at least 90 × 45 × 45 cm (length × width × height), and a pair, or a male with two females, needs at least 120 × 60 × 60 cm. Larger is better. Never keep two males together: they can come into serious conflict.

The substrate should be a loose mix of soil and coconut fibre of at least 8 cm, covered with a layer of leaves, so that the animal can dig and retain moisture. Furnish with cork, branches, flat stones and plants, so that there are at least two hides and plenty of shelter. A humid hide lined with damp sphagnum is part of the setup. The enclosure needs a tight lid with good ventilation and an easily accessible water dish.

TEMPERATURE

The enclosure needs a clear gradient. The basking spot should be 35-41 °C, measured on the surface with an infrared thermometer, and the cool end is 27-32 °C. Males and non-gravid females choose a body temperature of 30-36 °C themselves, while gravid females prefer 28-31 °C, so the gradient must be wide. Use two halogen spots at one end above a large, flat stone. Ceramic heaters and heat mats are not enough as the only heat source.

At night the heat is switched off, and the temperature may fall to 21-25 °C. The species tolerates little cold, so the enclosure must never become cold, not even in winter.

Read more: Heat and temperature

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Eutropis multifasciata requires a high humidity of 70-80 %, which may fall slightly during the day and rise at night. Mist the enclosure thoroughly twice a day, and mix water into the substrate. A layer of leaves on top helps retain moisture. The enclosure must not be constantly wet, because that causes fungal infections.

Keep a medium-sized dish of fresh water available, where the animal can drink and bathe. Change the water daily, and wash the dish every week.

Read more: Humidity, misting and ventilation

LIGHTING AND UVB

Eutropis multifasciata is diurnal and needs UVB for as long as the light is on. A T5 HO tube with 5-6 % UVB in a reflector, covering the basking-spot side of the enclosure, gives Ferguson zone 3. The zone is an estimate based on the way of life. Position the basking spot so that the animal's back is about 20 cm from the tube. UVB does not pass through glass or plastic, and the tube is replaced once a year or according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Supplement with strong, white daylight, so that the enclosure is bright. The photoperiod is 13 hours in summer and 11 hours in winter.

Read more: Lighting and UVB

FEEDING

Eutropis multifasciata eats mainly insects. Give a varied diet of roaches, crickets, mealworms, silkworms, black soldier fly larvae, snails and small locusts. Give as much as the animal eats in about 5 minutes, once a day; if the animal becomes fat, cut down to every second day.

Banana, papaya and berries can be given as a small treat. Lightly dust the insects with calcium, and give a vitamin supplement once a week. Always keep fresh water available.

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

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Eutropis multifasciata is curious, but shy and fast, and it flees when disturbed. Females can be kept together, and a male can be kept with two females in a large enclosure with many hides; males must never be kept together. Captive-bred animals can become reasonably tame with patience, especially if they are fed from tongs, but the species is not suited to much handling. Calm routines and many hides reduce stress.

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

Breeding

SEXUAL MATURITY AND SEXING

The animals are sexually mature at about 11-12 months of age. Reliable sexing of young animals requires a vet experienced in reptiles.

MATING

In the wild *Eutropis multifasciata* breeds in step with the rainy season, but the females in a population are not synchronous. A cool rest period is not necessary, and a true mating season in enclosures is not documented. A male with two females in a large enclosure with many hides works.

EGG-LAYING AND CLUTCHES

Eutropis multifasciata gives birth to live young: the eggs develop inside the female, and the young are born fully formed. A litter is 2-10 young, typically 4-6. How many litters the female has per year is not documented.

INCUBATION

There are no eggs to incubate. The length of the pregnancy is not documented but is probably 60-90 days. Pregnant females seek cooler places, around 29 °C, and become slower, so they must be able to find a spot at 28-30 °C and have peace. Give the female extra food, calcium and UVB, and keep the enclosure quiet with many hiding places.

REARING THE YOUNG

The young are about 4 cm from snout to vent at birth. Rear them in an enclosure with leaf litter, hides, UVB and high humidity, and give them small insects daily, dusted with calcium. Separate the young from the adults if the male is close.

Health and common mistakes

Eutropis multifasciata is hardy when temperature, light and humidity are right. The typical problems are:

- Calcium deficiency and brittle bones from too little UVB and a one-sided diet.
- Fungal infection and skin problems from a constantly wet substrate or poor ventilation.
- Obesity from too much food and little exercise.
- Internal and external parasites, especially in wild-caught animals.
- Fighting injuries between males and stress from too few hiding places.

Quarantine new animals for at least a month. The animals hide illness well, so contact a vet experienced in reptiles if appetite changes, or in the case of weight loss or swellings.

Read more: Quarantine and hygiene

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.