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SKINKS

Arabian Sand Skink

Scincus mitranus

A small, smooth, sand-coloured skink from the dunes of the Arabian Peninsula that swims through loose sand with undulating movements. *Scincus mitranus* spends most of its life a few centimetres below the surface, dives under at the slightest disturbance and needs a deep layer of clean sand, heat and dry conditions.

Family: Scincidae Former name: *Scincus muscatensis; Scincus arabicus; Scincus philbyi; Scincus richmondi; Scincus arenarius*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**15-20 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-18 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**80 × 50 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**28-35 °C**
Basking spot	**38-42 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**20-40%**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 3
Winter rest	**12-16 °C** 4-8 weeks
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Litter size	**1-4 young**
Gestation	**60-90 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about the care of *Scincus mitranus*, and the figures in this guide are borrowed from the closely related *Scincus scincus*, which lives in the same kind of sandy habitat.
TEMPERATURE	The daytime temperature in the enclosure should be 28-35 °C, and at night it can fall to 20-24 °C. The enclosure needs a clear gradient with a hot basking spot under a spotlight and a cooler place at the other end.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The species comes from the desert and must be kept dry, with a humidity of 20-40 %. The sand must not be damp, because damp encourages fungus and skin problems, and good ventilation is important.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species lives in bright sunshine, so the enclosure needs strong light for 10-12 hours a day.
FEEDING	*Scincus mitranus* eats arthropods such as beetles and centipedes in the wild. In the enclosure, crickets, locusts, cockroaches, and mealworms and their pupae are suitable, and the prey should be no larger than the animal's head.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is an animal to watch, not to handle. It is fast and shy, and touching it stresses it. If an animal has to be moved, it can be gently sifted out of the sand or lured into a small container of sand.
NATIVE RANGE	Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Iran.