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SKINKS

Giant Blue-tongued Skink

Tiliqua gigas

A large, tropical skink from New Guinea and the Moluccas with a broad blue tongue and a calm, diurnal life on the forest floor. *Tiliqua gigas* needs more humidity than its Australian relatives, a large enclosure and UVB. Many animals in the trade are wild-caught and find it hard to get used to handling.

Family: Scincidae Former name: *Scincus gigas*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**45-60 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**180 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-33 °C**
Basking spot	**37-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-24 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, fruit, plants and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Sexually mature	**18-36 months**
Litter size	**5-15 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Gestation	**90-120 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult animal needs an enclosure of at least 180 × 60 × 60 cm (length × width × height), corresponding to just over 1 m² of floor area. Larger is better, and floor area matters more than height.

TEMPERATURE

The animal must be able to choose between 24-29 °C at the cool end and 28-33 °C at the warm end. The surface of the basking spot must be 37-40 °C. At night the temperature must be 21-24 °C and not fall much below 21 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The humidity must be 60-80 %, higher than for the Australian species. Measure it at the cool end, and aim for the upper part of the range.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and needs UVB and strong light. Use a T5 tube with UVB, and position it so that the UV index at the basking spot is about 3-4 (Ferguson zone 3).

FEEDING

Tiliqua gigas is omnivorous. The staple is a varied mixture of animal protein, greens and a little fruit. Juveniles need 70-80 % protein, adults about 50-60 %. Adults need 40-50 % vegetables and leaves, and fruit at most 10 %.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Wild-caught *Tiliqua gigas* are stressed, defensive and at times aggressive, and some never become fully tame. Captive-bred animals are far calmer, and the Merauke form is generally calmer than the others.

NATIVE RANGE

Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.