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SKINKS

Western Blue-Tongued Lizard

Tiliqua occipitalis

Tiliqua occipitalis is a sturdy, terrestrial skink from southern and central Australia with brown crossbands over the body and tail and the broad, blue tongue that characterises the genus. The species reaches about 40 cm in length, is diurnal and omnivorous and needs a large enclosure with UVB and a warm basking spot. It gives birth to live young and is seldom seen in captivity.

Family: Scincidae Former name: *Cyclodus occipitalis; Cyclodus fasciatus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**35-45 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-32 °C**
Basking spot	**35-45 °C**
Temperature, night	**15-22 °C**
Humidity	**30-50%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, fruit, plants, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Litter size	**5 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Gestation	**90-120 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix III**
EU annex	**Annex C**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult animal needs an enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 60 cm (length × width × height). Larger is better. Floor area is more important than height, because the animal lives on the ground. The skink is best kept alone.
TEMPERATURE	Give the animal a temperature gradient from 22-26 °C at the cool end to 28-32 °C at the warm end. The surface of the basking spot must be 35-45 °C, and the animal must be able to choose how warm it wants to lie.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The species comes from dry to semi-arid regions and must not have high humidity. 30-50 % is suitable, measured at the cool end. The substrate must be slightly damp deeper down, but never wet.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and needs both UVB and strong light. Use a T5 tube with UVB above the mesh, and position it so that the UV index at the basking spot is 3-4 (Ferguson zone 3).
FEEDING	*Tiliqua occipitalis* is omnivorous, and the food must be varied as much as possible.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The skink is shy for the first few days, but settles in and tolerates calm handling. Lift it with the whole body supported, so the feet have something to stand on, never hold it belly up, and never grab the head or tail.
NATIVE RANGE	Australia.