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SKINKS

Giant Spiny Skink

Tribolonotus ponceleti

Tribolonotus ponceleti is a rare, secretive skink from the islands of the Solomon archipelago and the largest species in its genus. It has keeled, spiny scales and an angular, armoured head, lives on the forest floor and burrows, and it can make sounds. Its care is based on the climate and on the close relatives *Tribolonotus gracilis* and *Tribolonotus novaeguineae*.

Family: Scincidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**11-13 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**10 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**75 × 45 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-27 °C**
Basking spot	**27-28 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-24 °C**
Humidity	**70-90%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**1 eggs**
Incubation	**65-85 days** at 23-27 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Data Deficient (DD)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Very little is known about the care of *Tribolonotus ponceleti*. The climate in the range is warm and humid all year, and the species lives in the leaf litter of the forest floor.
TEMPERATURE	Keep the terrarium at 24-27 °C at the cool end and 27-28 °C in a warm hide, and let the temperature fall to 22-24 °C at night. The skink is active at dusk and at night and hardly basks, but warms itself in hiding.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The humidity should be 70-80 % by day and higher at night, preferably 80-90 %, and the substrate must always be damp. The species probably tolerates drying out very badly, like its close relatives.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The animal is active at dusk and at night, and its need for UVB is not documented.
FEEDING	In the wild the species eats arthropods. The staple diet can be crickets, cockroaches, mealworms, silkworms, black soldier fly larvae, earthworms and snails. Variety is important, and earthworms usually bring a hidden animal out.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Tribolonotus ponceleti* is an animal to watch and not for handling. Skinks in the genus play dead, try to flee, drop their tails or make sounds when seized, and this stresses them. Give a new animal at least two weeks in peace.
NATIVE RANGE	Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.