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ESCINCOS

Peters' Banded Skink

Scincopus fasciatus

A heavy, nocturnal burrowing skink from the edges of the Sahara, yellow to orange with broad black crossbands. *Scincopus fasciatus* digs permanent burrows in sandy soil, eats insects and grows to 20-25 cm. It needs deep, sandy substrate, a warm basking spot, a dark hiding place and dry air.

Familia: Scincidae Nombre anterior: *Scincus fasciatus; Cyclodus brandtii*

DATOS CLAVE

EL ANIMAL

Tamaño adulto	**20-25 cm** longitud total con la cola
Esperanza de vida	**10-15 años**
Activo	**De noche**
Modo de vida	**Excavador**
Hábitat	**Desierto, semidesierto y sabana**
Dificultad	**Intermedio**

CUIDADOS

Terrario mín.	**90 × 45 × 45 cm** L × An × Al para 1 adulto
Temperatura, día	**27-30 °C**
Punto caliente	**35-38 °C**
Temperatura, noche	**20-25 °C**
Humedad	**20-45 %**
Agua	**Bebedero**
UVB	**Recomendado** Zona Ferguson 1
Alimentación	**Insectos, fruta y plantas**
Se mantiene	**En solitario o en pareja**

CRÍA

Reproducción	**Ovípara**
Tamaño de la puesta	**4-5 huevos**
Incubación	**50-70 días** a 27-30 °C

PROTECCIÓN Y TRÁMITES

CITES	**No incluida**
Anexo de la UE	**No incluida**
UICN	**Preocupación menor (LC)**

Sobre la especie

Scincopus fasciatus is a heavily built, stout skink with a large, conical head, large eyes with vertically oval pupils, short, strong legs and a short, tapering tail. The scales are thick and separated by deep grooves, and two large triangular lobes cover the ear opening. The ground colour is yellow to orange with seven or eight broad black crossbands from the neck to the tip of the tail and a paler belly.

Adults are 20-25 cm in total, with the short tail. The species resembles *Scincus scincus*, but is far stouter and has only weakly fringed toes; it does not swim through the sand but digs permanent burrows. Two subspecies have been described: *S. f. fasciatus* and *S. f. melanocephalus* from the Red Sea coast of Sudan.

The species is nocturnal and quiet and tolerates handling. The animals in the trade are almost all wild-caught, and only a few breeding attempts have been described.

Distribución y hábitat

Scincopus fasciatus occurs in northern Africa: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Western Sahara, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Libya, Sudan and South Sudan. The species lives in and around the Sahara, especially on the northern and southern edges of the desert. The population is not assessed as threatened.

> **Área de distribución natural:** Marruecos, Argelia, Túnez, Sáhara Occidental, Mauritania, Mali, Níger, Chad, Sudán, Sudán del Sur y Libia.

HÁBITAT

The species lives in dry to semi-arid areas with sandy, sometimes stony soil, sparse desert vegetation, savanna, scrub and grassland. It digs permanent burrows, which it uses again and again, and hunts insects at night. It feeds on insects, and in captivity it also takes a little plant food. The biology is little known.

Cuidados

EL TERRARIO

Little is known about keeping *Scincopus fasciatus*, and the incubation and lifespan figures are borrowed from the related *Scincus scincus*.

A single animal needs at least 90 × 45 × 45 cm (length × width × height). Floor area matters more than height. Make the substrate at least 10 cm of slightly moist sand mixed with a little clay or soil so the burrows do not collapse, and place flat stones and cork on the floor of the enclosure so the animal cannot dig them down over itself. Build a dark hiding place, and preferably cover three sides of the enclosure so the animal feels secure.

Two animals can be kept together in larger enclosures if there is room, but the species is not social, and males must not be kept together. If the sex is unknown, it is safest to keep the animals separately. The enclosure needs a tight, escape-proof lid and good ventilation.

TEMPERATURA

By day the air should be 27-30 °C, and under a heat lamp a hide or a flat stone should reach 35-38 °C measured with an infrared thermometer. Put a thermostat on the heating. At night the temperature should be 20-25 °C. The cool side of the enclosure should be 24-27 °C so the animal can choose.

HUMEDAD Y AGUA

Humidity should be low, 20-45 %, with good ventilation. Provide a damp hide on the cool side, where the substrate under a piece of bark or stone is kept moist; it helps during shedding. A shallow water dish with fresh water should always be available and is changed daily.

ILUMINACIÓN Y UVB

Scincopus fasciatus is nocturnal, but weak UVB (Ferguson zone 1) is recommended. Use a UVB tube in a reflector above the basking spot and let the animal withdraw into shade. UVB does not pass through glass or plastic, and tubes are replaced according to the manufacturer's instructions.

The light period is 11 hours in winter and 13 hours in summer. Keep heat lamps off at night, and use a heat source without light if necessary.

Leer más: Luz y UVB

ALIMENTACIÓN

Scincopus fasciatus eats mostly insects such as cockroaches, crickets, mealworms, silkworms and black soldier fly larvae. A little greens and fruit can be offered as a supplement. Feeder insects must not be larger than the animal's head. Young animals are fed daily, and adults every second or third day with what they can eat in about five minutes.

Lightly dust the feeder insects with calcium and now and then with a vitamin supplement; too much vitamin is harmful. Use tongs so the animal does not swallow sand.

COMPORTAMIENTO Y MANIPULACIÓN

The species is calm and tolerates handling, but is most active at night and spends the day underground. New animals are best left in peace for two to three weeks, until they eat steadily. Do not pick the animal up from above, but slide a hand under it from the side and support the whole body.

Cría

MADUREZ SEXUAL Y SEXADO

The age at sexual maturity has not been documented. The sexes are hard to tell apart, and two animals kept together may turn out to be two males, which can injure each other.

APAREAMIENTO

Mating in captivity has not been described, and what conditions trigger it has not been documented. Keep males apart, and put only a male and a female together in a large enclosure with many hiding places. The female needs her own hiding places, and the animals are separated if they bite.

PUESTA Y NIDADAS

The species lays eggs. Clutches of 4-5 eggs have been recorded in captivity; how many clutches a female lays per year has not been documented. A female that is to lay eggs needs deep, slightly moist sand where she can dig a nest.

INCUBACIÓN

The eggs are moved carefully, keeping the same side up, to a closed box of slightly moist vermiculite at a steady 27-30 °C. Incubation takes 50-70 days. Check weekly that the substrate is slightly moist and that no eggs are going mouldy.

CRIANZA DE LOS JUVENILES

Rearing of young has not been described. Young animals are fed small insects daily and are kept individually in an enclosure with deep, slightly moist substrate and a dark hiding place.

Salud y errores frecuentes

Scincopus fasciatus is hardy when temperature and substrate are right. The typical problems are:

- Internal parasites, especially in wild-caught animals; have the droppings examined by a veterinarian.
- Calcium deficiency from a one-sided diet.
- Intestinal impaction from feeder insects that are too large or from swallowing sand.
- Skin problems and respiratory infection from a substrate that is too damp.
- Stress in newly imported, wild-caught animals.

Quarantine new animals for at least a month. The animals hide illness well, so contact a veterinarian experienced with reptiles if appetite changes or weight loss or swellings appear.

Pregunta siempre a quien sepa

Esta guía es un buen punto de partida, pero no puede sustituir a la experiencia. Cada animal es distinto, y gran parte de lo más importante se aprende de personas que llevan años criando la especie. Habla con un criador, un aficionado con experiencia o un veterinario que conozca los reptiles y anfibios antes de hacerte con el animal, y otra vez si algo no parece normal.