herpy

SCINQUES

Algerian orange-tailed skink

Eumeces algeriensis

A large, sturdy skink from Morocco and Algeria with a brown ground colour and pale crossbands with reddish eyespots. *Eumeces algeriensis* burrows into dry soil, needs sun, UVB and a deep substrate, and is often confused with *Eumeces schneiderii*.

Famille: Scincidae Ancien nom: *Eumeces schneideri algeriensis; Novoeumeces algeriensis*

INFORMATIONS ESSENTIELLES

L'ANIMAL

Taille adulte	**30-45 cm** longueur totale queue comprise
Espérance de vie	**15-20 ans**
Activité	**Le jour**
Mode de vie	**Terrestre et fouisseur**
Habitat	**Semi-désert et forêt et prairie tempérées**
Difficulté	**Intermédiaire**

ENTRETIEN

Terrarium min.	**120 × 60 × 45 cm** L × l × H pour 2 adultes
Température, jour	**24-30 °C**
Zone de bain de soleil	**38-45 °C**
Température, nuit	**21-24 °C**
Hygrométrie	**20-40 %**
Eau	**Gamelle d'eau**
UVB	**Indispensables** Zone de Ferguson 3
Alimentation	**Insectes, plantes et vers/escargots**
Détention	**Seul ou en couple**

REPRODUCTION

Reproduction	**Ovipare**
Taille de la ponte	**5-15 œufs**
Incubation	**40-60 jours** à 28-30 °C

PROTECTION ET FORMALITÉS

CITES	**Non inscrite**
Annexe UE	**Non inscrite**
UICN	**Préoccupation mineure (LC)**

À propos de l'espèce

Eumeces algeriensis is a large, sturdily built skink with smooth, glossy scales, a short, triangular head, short legs and a long tail. The ground colour is brown to ochre, with irregular pale crossbands alternating with bands bearing reddish eyespots. There are no longitudinal stripes. Adults are 30-45 cm long including the tail, and slightly larger and heavier in build than *E. schneiderii*.

The species was formerly regarded as a subspecies of *Eumeces schneiderii* and has also been placed in the genus *Novoeumeces*. It is now treated as a separate species with two subspecies, *E. a. algeriensis* and *E. a. meridionalis*; whether the latter is a valid form is unresolved. The two species are often confused in the trade. *E. algeriensis* has crossbands, not longitudinal stripes.

The skink is diurnal, digs a great deal and is less sociable than *E. schneiderii*. It basks willingly at high temperatures and afterwards withdraws into the substrate or under a stone.

Répartition et habitat

Eumeces algeriensis occurs in Morocco and Algeria, below 1,700 m above sea level. The subspecies *E. a. meridionalis* belongs in eastern Morocco and north-western Algeria. The species is native to the Maghreb in North Africa and also occurs in the Spanish exclave of Melilla on the Mediterranean coast of Morocco.

> **Aire d'origine:** Maroc et Algérie.

HABITAT

The species lives in a mixture of habitats in the Maghreb: Mediterranean scrub, open woodland, grassland, sandy coasts, farmland and gardens. The terrain is often stony, with hard, compacted ground and patches of sand. The animals burrow under stones, which keeps them cool during the hottest hours of the summer.

They are diurnal, bask and forage during the warm hours of the day, and withdraw into burrows they have dug when it becomes too hot or too cold.

Entretien

LE TERRARIUM

Eumeces algeriensis lives on the ground and burrows, so floor area and substrate matter most. Two animals need at least 120 × 60 × 45 cm (length × width × height); a single animal can be kept in 90 × 45 × 40 cm. The figures are borrowed from *Eumeces schneiderii*, which has the same requirements.

The substrate should be deep, 10-15 cm, and loose: a mixture of coconut fibre, peat or orchid bark with no more than 30 % sand. More sand carries a risk of impaction. Place flat slabs of stone directly on the floor of the enclosure before adding the substrate, so that the animal cannot undermine them. Provide a low, wide hide of heavy ceramic with a small entrance. The skink is a poor climber, so branches should be large pieces of driftwood resting on the floor, and raised surfaces should be avoided, because the animal may fall and injure itself. Any plants should be succulents in pots.

The enclosure must be completely escape-proof.

TEMPÉRATURE

The enclosure needs a clear gradient. By day the temperature should be 24-30 °C, coolest at one end and warmest near the basking spot. Under a halogen spot the basking spot should reach 38-45 °C, measured on the surface with an infrared thermometer. The species basks willingly at high temperatures, but must always be able to retreat into the substrate.

At night the heat is switched off, and the temperature may fall to 21-24 °C, but never below 21 °C. Control all heat sources with a thermostat. The enclosure must not stand in direct sunlight, because the temperature can then quickly exceed 40 °C and kill the animal.

En savoir plus: Chaleur et température

HYGROMÉTRIE ET EAU

The species comes from dry regions and must be kept dry: the humidity should stay below 40 %. Mist lightly once a day if the air is very dry, and twice a day when a shed is approaching and the skin looks dull. A few spots may be kept moist to help during shedding.

Provide fresh water in a shallow dish that the animal can climb out of, and change the water daily. The animal bathes often and soon fouls the water.

ÉCLAIRAGE ET UVB

The species is diurnal and needs UVB for as long as the light is on. It is placed in Ferguson zone 3; the figure is borrowed from *Eumeces schneiderii*. A T5 tube in a reflector above the basking spot provides the UVB and must be replaced according to the manufacturer's instructions.

The photoperiod is about 12 hours a day in the summer months and about 10 hours in winter, with darkness at night.

En savoir plus: Lumière et UVB

ALIMENTATION

Eumeces algeriensis is omnivorous but feeds mainly on insects: crickets, cockroaches, mealworms, silkworms, waxworms and hornworms, as well as snails and earthworms. The animal is not fast and does not always catch hopping prey, so feed from a dish or tongs. Pinkie mice are offered only as an occasional treat, because they are fatty and the animal easily becomes overweight.

Adults are fed every second day. Offer greens twice a week, for example kale, cabbage leaves and carrot, although some animals will not take them. Dust the food with calcium at every feeding and with a vitamin supplement once a week. Young animals need supplements most.

En savoir plus: Calcium, vitamines et compléments

COMPORTEMENT ET MANIPULATION

The species is less sociable than *E. schneiderii*. It can be kept singly, as a pair or as two females, but never two males together. The enclosure needs several hides and basking spots.

New animals are often wary. Lift the animal from below and never grab it from above; a bite can hurt. Quarantine new animals for at least 30 days. The animal digs a great deal and is often seen only in the morning and at feeding.

Reproduction

MATURITÉ SEXUELLE ET SEXAGE

The age at sexual maturity is not documented for the species. Males are more powerfully built and have a broader head than females, but the difference is clear only in adults.

ACCOUPLEMENT

Mating is not documented for the species, and captive breeding is rare. In the close relative *Eumeces schneiderii*, mating takes place in spring after a cool period, and the female is placed with the male for one to two weeks as long as there is no aggression.

PONTE ET COUVÉES

The species lays eggs. Clutch size is not documented; *Eumeces schneiderii* lays 5-15 eggs, and the figure in the specification box is borrowed from it. Give the female a nest box at the warm end with a deep, moist layer of sand and vermiculite so that she does not retain the eggs. The number of clutches per year is not documented.

INCUBATION

Move the eggs carefully to an incubation box with moist vermiculite and do not turn them. At 28-30 °C they hatch after about 40-60 days; the figures are borrowed from *Eumeces schneiderii* and are not documented for the species itself. Temperature-dependent sex determination is not documented.

En savoir plus: Incubation des œufs

ÉLEVAGE DES JEUNES

Keep the hatchlings in a small enclosure with a loose, slightly moist substrate, a basking spot and UVB. Give small insects daily, dusted with calcium, and keep them apart if they bite one another. Size at hatching and growth are not documented for the species.

Santé et erreurs courantes

Eumeces algeriensis is hardy when temperature, light and substrate are right. The typical problems are:

- Poor appetite and emaciation, most often because of too low a temperature or a weak heat bulb.
- Calcium deficiency and brittle bones from too little UVB and a one-sided diet.
- Constipation if the animal swallows sand along with its prey; a substrate with no more than 30 % sand and food offered in a dish reduce the risk.
- Problems with sheds, toes and ears if the air is too dry during shedding.
- Overheating if the enclosure stands in direct sunlight or lacks a cool spot.
- Obesity from too much fatty food.

Quarantine new animals for at least 30 days. Contact a vet with reptile experience if appetite changes, or in the case of weight loss or swellings.

Demandez toujours conseil à quelqu’un qui s’y connaît

Ce guide est un bon point de départ, mais il ne remplace pas l’expérience. Les animaux diffèrent, et une grande partie de l’essentiel s’apprend auprès de personnes qui élèvent l’espèce depuis des années. Parlez à un éleveur, à un terrariophile expérimenté ou à un vétérinaire qui connaît les reptiles et les amphibiens avant d’acquérir l’animal - et de nouveau si quelque chose vous semble anormal.

Le guide complet avec carte et mises à jour : herpy.org/en/skinks/eumeces-algeriensis