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GECKOS

Western banded gecko

Coleonyx variegatus

A small, slender desert gecko from the south-western USA and north-western Mexico, with silky-soft skin, movable eyelids and bands of yellow and brown. It reaches only 10-15 cm, swings its tail up over its back like a scorpion when hunting, and needs a warm, dry terrarium with a single humid hide.

Family: Eublepharidae Former name: *Stenodactylus variegatus; Eublepharis variegatus* Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**10-15 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-15 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Rock-dwelling and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Desert, semi-desert and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**40 × 30 × 25 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**24-28 °C**
Basking spot	**30-34 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**30-50%**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**40-50 days** at 27-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	The species mostly stays on the ground, so floor area matters more than height. About 30 × 30 cm is the minimum that gives a pair the chance to choose between warm and cool, dry and damp.
TEMPERATURE	The species tolerates large swings, but needs a distinct gradient, so it can choose for itself. Keep 24-28 °C in the terrarium by day and a warm area of 30-34 °C. It is better to start at 30-32 °C than at the upper limit.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The species comes from regions with very little rain and loses only a little water through the skin.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is strictly nocturnal and spends the day in hiding. UVB is not necessary when the insects are dusted with calcium and vitamin D3, and it is expressly advised against for the desert-dwelling *Coleonyx* species.
FEEDING	The gecko feeds on live insects. Medium-sized mealworms can be the staple, and crickets, wax moth larvae and small roaches provide variety.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The gecko is shy and fast, especially wild-caught animals, and easily sheds the tail if it feels threatened. It is mostly an animal to observe. In the evening it comes out and hunts with its tail curled up over its back.
NATIVE RANGE	United States and Mexico.