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GECKOS

African whole-toed gecko

Holodactylus africanus

A small, nocturnal ground gecko from the dry regions of eastern Africa with large eyes and movable eyelids, long claws on the toes and a thick, short tail in which it stores fat. It digs its own hiding places and feeds mainly on termites. The species is rare in vivaria, and there are few published accounts of its care.

Family: Eublepharidae Former name: *Holodactylus aculeatus* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**6-11 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and savanna**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 40 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**27-30 °C**
Basking spot	**33-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-20 °C**
Humidity	**30-40%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Incubation	**45-60 days** at 26-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

There are few recommendations for enclosure size for the species. For one animal, an enclosure of about 45 × 45 cm floor area is mentioned, and for a small breeding group of one male and two females at least 90 cm in length.

TEMPERATURE

By day the enclosure should be 27-30 °C, with a hot spot of about 33-35 °C under a low heat lamp at one end. The other end should be cooler, so that the animal can choose for itself.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The humidity in the enclosure itself should be low, about 30-40 % by day, so that the surface of the substrate is dry. The moisture instead comes from the humid hide, where the animal can rest and shed.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is nocturnal and hides for most of the day. A regular daily rhythm of about 12-14 hours of light in summer and 10-12 hours in winter is a good framework. The figures are borrowed from related species.

FEEDING

In the wild, *Holodactylus africanus* lives mainly on termites, supplemented with beetles, spiders and other small arthropods.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

It is a calm but bite-prone species that prefers to be left in peace. The bite can be strong, and the animal can hold on. It is not dangerous, but it hurts, and the wound should be washed.

NATIVE RANGE

Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania.