herpy

GECKOS

Common dwarf gecko

Lygodactylus capensis

Lygodactylus capensis is a small, greyish-brown dwarf gecko from southern and eastern Africa, where it lives on trees in savanna and open woodland and often on house walls. It is diurnal, grows to 7-9 cm including the tail and weighs less than 1 g. The species is the type species of its genus and common in the wild, but rarely kept.

Family: Gekkonidae Former name: *Hemidactylus capensis; Lygodactylus strigatus* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**7-9 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**0.7-1.1 g**
Lifespan	**4-6 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Savanna**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**30 × 30 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**30-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**50-75%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects and small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**In pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**9-15 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Incubation	**60-120 days** at 24-27 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
Little is known about the care of *Lygodactylus capensis*. The climate in the range is hot, with rain in summer and a dry, cooler winter, and the species lives on trees in savanna and open woodland.

TEMPERATURE
By day the background temperature should be 25-30 °C with a basking spot of 30-35 °C under a small spot lamp.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
Humidity is kept at 50-60 % by day and 60-75 % at night. Mist lightly every morning, so that leaves and walls get droplets, and let the enclosure dry out during the day.

LIGHTING AND UVB
Lygodactylus capensis often sits in full sun and needs strong, even light. Use T5 fluorescent tubes or daylight LEDs, and combine them with a UVB tube. The UVB strength is not documented for the species.

FEEDING
Ants make up 30-50 % of the diet in the wild. In the enclosure the diet consists of small live feeder insects: small crickets, fruit flies, springtails, bean weevils, small isopods and small cockroaches.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
Lygodactylus capensis is fast and can easily escape or be injured, and the tail is easily shed, so the species is not suited to handling. Open the doors only briefly, and watch for gaps through which the animals can escape.

NATIVE RANGE
South Africa, Eswatini, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Angola, Zambia, Malawi, Congo - Kinshasa, Tanzania and Kenya.