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GECKOS

Moorish gecko

Tarentola mauritanica

A stocky gecko from the rocks and house walls of the Mediterranean, with a back armoured with pointed tubercular scales and large eyes with vertical pupils. It is hardy and lives on insects, but does not become sexually mature until after several years and needs a cool winter rest to breed.

Family: Phyllodactylidae Former name: *Lacerta mauritanica; Platydactylus mauritanicus* Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**12-16 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**8-12 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and rock-dwelling**
Habitat	**Rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 45 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**30-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-20 °C**
Humidity	**50-60%**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**36-60 months**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-6**
Incubation	**55-98 days** at 27-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

The gecko is a climber, so height and vertical surfaces matter more than floor area. Recommendations range from 45 × 45 × 45 cm for one animal to at least 100 × 50 × 70 cm (length × width × height) for a pair.

TEMPERATURE

By day the enclosure should be 25-30 °C and at night about 18-20 °C. Give the animal a warm spot of 30-35 °C under a lamp, so it can choose for itself how warm it wants to be.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The species comes from dry to semi-arid regions and manages with a moderate humidity of about 50-60%.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Tarentola mauritanica is most active in the evening and at night, but also basks in the wild, so a weak UVB light is recommended.

FEEDING

The species is an insectivore and in the wild takes beetles, spiders, ants, butterflies and caterpillars. In the enclosure you can give crickets, small cockroaches, locusts and occasionally waxworms or mealworms as a treat.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Tarentola mauritanica is vigilant and not an animal to be picked up for fun. It can get used to your being there, but handling stresses it, and it drops its tail if it feels threatened.

NATIVE RANGE

Portugal, Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Morocco, Western Sahara, Algeria and Tunisia.