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GECKOS

Northern sand gecko

Tropiocolotes tripolitanus

One of the smallest geckos in the world: sandy brown, spotted and with a white tail tip, only 5-7 cm including the tail. It comes from the Sahara and the dry regions of North Africa, is active from dusk and at night, lives peacefully in groups and can be kept in an enclosure as small as 20 × 20 × 20 cm.

Family: Gekkonidae Former name: *Stenodactylus tripolitanus; Tropiocolotes apoklomax; Tropiocolotes occidentalis* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**5-7 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Desert**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**20 × 20 × 20 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**26-30 °C**
Basking spot	**35-45 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**30-50%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Insects and small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs, one male with several females or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**1-2 eggs**
Incubation	**60-90 days** at 28-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	*Tropiocolotes tripolitanus* and *Tropiocolotes steudneri* are cared for in the same way, and most of the knowledge about the care of the genus is based on these two species.
TEMPERATURE	Keep 26-30 °C by day and a small hot spot of 35-45 °C at one end, measured on a flat stone under the lamp.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The air must be dry, about 30-50 % and not above 60 %. Mist part of the enclosure two to three times a week in the evening or early in the morning: the animals lick the droplets from stones and hides, as they lick dew in the wild.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Tropiocolotes tripolitanus* is most active from dusk and at night, but gladly uses the hot spot, and a fixed daily rhythm is important.
FEEDING	*Tropiocolotes tripolitanus* lives on very small insects and other arthropods and has a large appetite and fast metabolism.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Tropiocolotes tripolitanus* is small but very active and hunts eagerly, especially in the evening.
NATIVE RANGE	Morocco, Western Sahara, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad.