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CHAMELEONS

Short-Tailed Pygmy Chameleon

Rieppeleon brevicaudatus

Rieppeleon brevicaudatus is a small, brown, ground-living chameleon from the forest floor in Tanzania and Kenya. It reaches only 8-10 cm, lays eggs and resembles a dead leaf. The species is hardy for its size and is kept in a small, humid enclosure with a thick layer of leaf litter and at most 25 °C by day.

Family: Chamaeleonidae Former name: *Rhampholeon brevicaudatus* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**8-10 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**3-5 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest and montane forest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**40 × 30 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**20-25 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-20 °C**
Humidity	**70-95%**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Insects and small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**4-8 months**
Clutch size	**1-6 eggs**
Clutches per year	**2-4**
Incubation	**60-75 days** at 20-25 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult animal needs an enclosure of at least 40 × 30 × 40 cm (length × width × height). A pair or a male with two females needs at least 75 × 30 × 40 cm.
TEMPERATURE	The species comes from the forest floor and tolerates heat poorly. The daytime temperature must be 20-25 °C and the night temperature 16-20 °C. For short periods it tolerates more, but over 30 °C is dangerous.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The humidity must be 70-95 %; the species tolerates down to about 60 % for short periods.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species lives on the forest floor and does not need strong light. A fluorescent tube or an LED with white light along the whole length of the enclosure, on for about 12 hours a day, suits the day length in East Africa.
FEEDING	*Rieppeleon brevicaudatus* eats small insects and other arthropods: fruit flies, small crickets, cockroach nymphs and woodlice. Prey must not be larger than the distance between the animal's eyes.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is kept singly, in pairs or as a male with two females in an enclosure that is large enough.
NATIVE RANGE	Tanzania and Kenya.