herpy

SKINKS

Bobtail

Tiliqua rugosa

A slow, heavily armoured Australian skink that looks like a pine cone with a short, broad tail. *Tiliqua rugosa* has a cobalt-blue tongue that it displays when threatened, lives mostly on plants and forms pairs that stay together year after year. It needs a basking spot, UVB and dry conditions.

Family: Scincidae Former name: *Trachydosaurus rugosus* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**30-45 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**600-900 g**
Lifespan	**10-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and savanna**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**15-29 °C**
Basking spot	**35-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**10-20 °C**
Humidity	**20-40%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, fruit, plants and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Litter size	**1-4 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Gestation	**140-170 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix III**
EU annex	**Annex C**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	The species does not climb, so floor area is what matters most. A pair needs at least 120 × 60 × 45 cm (length × width × height), and larger is better. Smaller enclosures of 90-100 × 50-60 cm are only enough for one animal.
TEMPERATURE	The enclosure must have a clear gradient. The warm end must be 27-29 °C, and under a spotlight the basking spot must reach 35-40 °C for several hours a day. Figures for the cool end range from about 15 °C to 21 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The species comes from dry regions and needs a humidity of 20-40 %. Keep the substrate dry, and do not let water stand. Offer fresh water in a very shallow dish that cannot tip over and that the animal can easily climb out of.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and needs a UVB tube switched on for 8-12 hours a day. The tube must be measured regularly or replaced at least every six months, because the UVB output declines.
FEEDING	*Tiliqua rugosa* is omnivorous with an emphasis on plants. Adults need 70-80 % plant food and only 20-30 % animal food.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is calm and gets used to gentle handling. New animals can be shy, and some revert to hissing and gaping after a few days without contact.
NATIVE RANGE	Australia.