herpy

SKINKS

Red-Eyed Bush Crocodile Skink

Tribolonotus gracilis

Tribolonotus gracilis is a shy, crepuscular skink from the rainforest of northern New Guinea with a red-orange ring around the eyes and rows of pointed, backward-curving scales down the back that give it an armoured, almost dragon-like appearance. It lives hidden in damp forest litter, can make sounds and lays only one egg at a time. It is best suited as a display animal, not for handling.

Family: Scincidae Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**16-20 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Rainforest and wetland**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 45 × 45 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-27 °C**
Basking spot	**27-28 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-24 °C**
Humidity	**70-90%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**36-48 months**
Clutch size	**1 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-6**
Incubation	**65-85 days** at 23-27 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	A single animal needs a terrarium of at least 60 × 45 × 45 cm, and bigger is better. A pair needs at least 0.3 m² of floor space, for example 90 × 45 cm.
TEMPERATURE	*Tribolonotus gracilis* is tropical, but does not bask in the wild. Keep the terrarium at 24-26 °C at the cool end and 27-28 °C in a warm hide, and let the temperature fall to 22-24 °C at night.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The species tolerates drying out very badly. The humidity must be 70-80 % by day and higher at night, preferably about 90 %, and the substrate must always be damp.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is active at dusk and at night, and the information on UVB is conflicting.
FEEDING	The species is insectivorous. The staple diet can be crickets, cockroaches (e.g. *Blaptica dubia* and *Blaberus discoidalis*), mealworms, superworms, hornworms, silkworms, black soldier fly larvae, earthworms and snails.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Tribolonotus gracilis* is an animal to watch and not for handling. When seized, it squeals, plays dead, tries to flee or drops its tail, and this stresses it.
NATIVE RANGE	Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

The full guide with map and updates: herpy.org/skinker/tribolonotus-gracilis