



Leopard Gecko

Natural History

Common Name: Common Leopard Gecko, Spotted Fat-tailed Gecko

Scientific Name: *Eublepharis macularius*

Lifespan

- Roughly 6 – 10 years; males 10 – 20; record 27+ years

Size

- 8” for females; 10” for males, giants ~12”, males are typically larger and heavier than females

Distribution

- Eastern Turkey, eastern Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, northwestern India

Habitat

- Deserts, rocky dry grassland

Habits

- Takes shelter in burrows or under rocks (humid conditions in otherwise arid environment)
- Crepuscular or cathemeral
- Primarily solitary
- Caudal autonomy – can drop tail for defense, new tail different shape and texture, ~40 days
- Lacks lamellae on toes; cannot scale smooth surfaces, has well developed claws
- Brumates during cool weather
- TSD – first 2 weeks of incubation, females 79 – 84 and 93 – 95 F. and males 88 – 91 F.

Diet

- Wide variety of invertebrates, occasionally small vertebrates
- Active hunter, uses sight, scent, and sound to locate prey
- Consumes shed skin (possibly nutritious)
- Waves tail to distract prey
- Stores fat in tail
- Does not eat during brumation





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Captive Care

Housing

- 10 or 20 gallon long tank for one or a pair of geckos (20 long)
- Substrate can be newspaper, cypress mulch, orchid bark, reptile carpet, slate, ceramic tiles, nothing, *avoid cedar chips, gravel or sand!*
- Sturdy water dish – water must be available at all times, misting cycle
- Two hide boxes (warm side, cool side) and a humid hide
- Humid hide damp paper towels, sphagnum moss, coconut fiber, vermiculite
- No branches, but live or plastic plants if desired

Temperature and Lighting

- Ambient cage temperature 75 F, with “hot area” of 88 to 90 F. Provide heat gradient
- “Hot area” can be achieved by using radiant heat, heat pad on outside of cage, or both
- Lighting can be dome lamp with incandescent bulbs for heat as well - 12 hr cycle
- UVB lighting not necessary, but beneficial
- Thermometer (temp gun or probe) to measure actual temperature is a necessity
- Adjustable temperature heat pads or rheostats hooked to any heat source is beneficial

Diet

- Carnivorous - variety of insects: crickets, dubia roaches, mealworms, superworms, silkworms, hornworms, butterworms. Wax worms and pinky mice only rarely (increase weight)
- Fruit or other baby food as occasional treat
- Supplemental calcium without vitamin D3 (no phosphorus) added
- Options for supplementation – gut loading prey, dusting prey, leave as powder in shallow bowl (gut loading is best, do not add to water)
- Feed daily or every other day* Remove uneaten live prey

Special Notes

- Several problems – crypto, coccidia, MBD, anorexia, impaction, stuck shed, etc.
- Keep singly, especially males, one male and few females, few females OK, but watch closely!
- Widely bred in captivity; many different captive produced color morphs known
- Vocalizes – barks, squeals, screams
- Turns white before shedding
- Watch for retained shed on toes, limbs, and around eyes – can cause problems (loss of toes)
- Usually defecates in one area of its enclosure

