Aurora ANIMAL + HOSPITAL
www.AuroraAnimalHospital.com (303) 680-7305

Blue Tongue Skink Caresheet

Please note these care sheets are intended for the average reptile owner to ensure that your pet is receiving basic care needed to have a healthy life and there are other aspects of advanced care that can be considered for healthy pets.

Brief Description

Blue Tongued Skinks are a species of terrestrial lizard from Australia, New Guinea and some parts of Indonesia. As their name suggests, they have a bright blue tongue that is flashed with an open mouth as a defense mechanism. The most commonly found subspecies in the pet trade is the Northern Blue Tongued Skink (*Tiliqua scincoides intermedia*) from Australia. These lizards give live birth and reach an adult size of 18-24 inches. They have become increasingly popular in the pet trade due to their docile nature with time and socialization.



Lifespan

With appropriate husbandry, these lizards can reach 15-20 years or more in age.

Sexing

Sexing Blue Tongued Skinks is very difficult as there aren't obvious differences between the sexes. Occasionally, when a male defecates, he may evert his hemipenes which can be helpful in determining your skink's sex.

Caging

A 20 gallon aquarium is appropriate for a baby, but these lizards grow quickly and floor space is key. A floor plan of 36 inches by 18 inches (40 gallon tank) at minimum is needed for an adult, but you will find that Blue Tongued Skinks will utilize all of the space that you provide. A screen top to prevent escapes or prevent other pets from investigating too closely is also needed. Blue Tongued Skinks do best when kept alone. Females can occasionally be kept together, but watch for aggression and separation may be necessary.

Substrate

Blue Tongued Skinks do well on a variety of substrates. Newspaper, recycled paper substrates, or cage carpet are all valid options and allow for easy cleaning, but don't hold humidity well or allow burrowing. A humid hide box with damp sphagnum moss may be needed to ensure that your pet doesn't have issues while shedding. Coco coir and cypress mulch are preferred for maintaining humidity and because these lizards frequently like to burrow. Clean leaf litter in addition to your substrate is a nice option for allowing your skink to burrow and perform natural behaviors while ensuring that they feel safe and secure. Always provide appropriate hides in multiple areas of the cage so that your skink can move around to thermoregulate; but nothing too high since they're not the best climbers.

Lighting and Temperature

Reptiles need a warm place to bask (**90-100 degrees**) on one side of the cage in order digest food and nutrients properly. The other side of the cage should be cooler (**75-85 degrees**) so they don't overheat. A thermometer should be placed at the same level of the pet in the basking area to accurately measure temperatures. Lights should be on for 10-12 hours each day and then total darkness at night. Night temperatures can safely drop to 65 degrees so a night time heat source is not necessary in most homes.

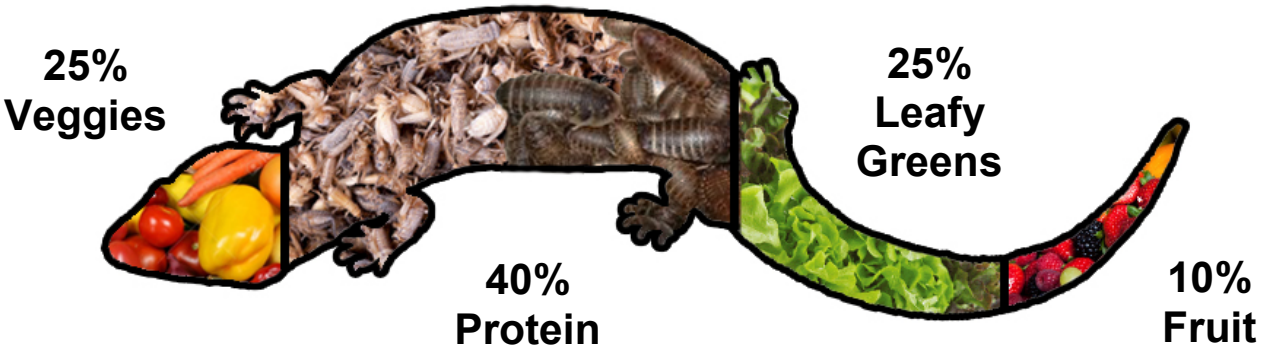
A UVB bulb must be provided to allow your pet to process calcium and prevent Metabolic Bone Disease and illness. A bulb that specifically provides UVB is necessary as UVB does not penetrate glass or plastic, so having the cage near a window is not adequate. T5 or T8 Zoo Med Reptisun 10.0 or Arcadia 12% are the preferred high quality brands. After about 6 months of use the bulbs will stop emitting adequate levels of UVB, even though they are still shining, so it's important to change the bulb every 6 months.

Humidity

Northern Blue Tongued Skinks do best when humidity stays between 25-40%, while subspecies from Indonesia or New Guinea require 40-45%. A commercially available hygrometer will help to make sure your humidity stays at appropriate levels.

Water
Fresh water in shallow water bowl should always be provided and occasional misting is helpful to maintain humidity and ensure hydration.

Food
Blue tongued skinks are true omnivores and variety ensures appropriate nutrition. Diets that are too high in fat and protein will lead to obesity and shorten the life of your skink. Approximately 50% of your skink's diet should be made up of vegetables and dark, leafy greens. Look for collard, turnip, mustard and dandelion greens, cooked squash, hibiscus and other edible flowers or bell pepper. 40% of your skink's diet should be made of high quality proteins, primarily insects. Crickets and dubia roaches are great nutritionally and provide enrichment and exercise. Make sure to gutload any feeder insects with fresh produce and dark, leafy greens. Commercially available canned snails, are relished in addition to hardboiled egg, superworms, rare pinkie mice, boiled chicken, or premium canned dog or cat food – these should be a small percentage of the diet to avoid obesity however. The last 10% of your skink's diet can be made up of fruit including raspberries, strawberries, bananas, blueberries, melon, or papaya. Repashy Bluey Buffet is an excellent supplement to a well-rounded diet.



Blue Tongue Skinks are Omnivores

40% Animal Protein	**25% Veggies**	**25% Leafy Greens**	**10% Fruits**
• Dubia roaches • Crickets • Superworms • Hard boiled egg • Cooked turkey/chicken • Low fat canned dog food	• Butternut squash • Sweet potato • Yellow squash • Mushrooms • Bell peppers • Carrots	• Collard greens • Dandelions • Kale • Turnip greens • Escarole • Mustard Greens	• Berries • Banana • Mango • Papaya • Melons • Prickly pear
Percentages can be used for individual meals or as a guide for the average of meals over the week.			
Supplementation: Calcium (without D3) sprinkled on food 3-4 times weekly until 2 years of age then 1-2 times weekly. A multivitamin can be used less frequently (once or twice a month) if desired but with good nutrition this is not always necessary.			