Aurora ANIMAL + HOSPITAL
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Red-eyed Crocodile 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
Red-eyed crocodile skinks *(Tribolonotus gracilis)* are a small nocturnal lizard native to tropical forests of New Guinea. They have an armored body with a large triangular head and distinctive red orange rings around their eyes. This species is shy and generally better as a display animal that prefers not be handled much. They can drop their tails with stress or rough handling.



Lifespan
With proper care expected lifespan of around 8-10 years on average.

Sexing
Males can be distinguished from females by the presence of small raised pores on the toe pads of their 3rd/4th toes on the back feet once they are mature.

Caging
A 20 gallon glass tank, or similar size front opening tank works well for this species to help with humidity. Multiple hides should be provided. Live or artificial plants and leafy green foliage throughout the enclosure provide shelter and will make your skink feel more secure in its environment. If you choose to use live plants you might try Dracaena, Schefflera arboricola (umbrella plant), hibiscus, ficus bushes, Pothos, and spider plant. Multiple females can potentially be kept together in larger enclosures, but housing them singly is recommended.

Substrate
In a naturalistic vivarium the substrate typically consists of a drainage layer of hydroton (expanded clay pellets), then a barrier such as screen or mesh, then at least 2-3" mixed substrate layer of coco fiber, play sand and fertilizer-free that is kept damp (not wet). This substrate help retain humidity and allows for hiding and digging behaviors to reduce stress in this species. This species prefers to be able to hide amongst leaf litter.

Water
A shallow water dish with fresh water must be available at all times. It should also be stable, so it cannot be spilled, and it should be easy to climb in and out of from all sides. The dishes used under potted plants are excellent for water dishes and inexpensive. Vitamin drops do not need to be added to the water.

Lighting and Temperature
Red-eyed crocodile skinks need a warm place to bask (**80-83 degrees**) on one side of the cage in order digest food and nutrients properly. The other side of the cage should be cooler (**70-75 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 70 degrees so a night time heat source may not be necessary in some homes.

A bulb that specifically provides UVB is recommended for this species, but they can potentially do well with appropriate supplementation being a nocturnal species. T5 or T8 Zoo Med Reptisun 2.5 or Arcadia Shade Dweller 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
Humidity in the cage should be 70-80% at all times, which is admittedly difficult to maintain in our dry Colorado climate. An automatic misting system is often necessary to raise humidity multiple times a day. Glass enclosures are generally better for maintaining humidity, though a mesh top may need to partially covered with foil to help retain moisture. Humidity should be monitored by a digital hygrometer.

Food
Live insects are a must for your skink; they do not eat plants or veggies. The best items to use are crickets, dubia roaches, and superworms as they can be gutloaded to provide good nutrition. Mealworms and waxworms should only be given as a treat because of the high fat content. All insects must be first given a nutritious diet for at least 4 hours before being fed to your leopard gecko. This process is called “gut loading” (see below), and it is very important to the health of your pet reptile.

Gutloading
Gutloading is the process of feeding crickets, superworms, and/or dubia roaches a nutritious diet so they can ultimately provide your reptile with the proper nutrients it requires as it would in nature. Supplementing with a calcium and multivitamin powder is important, but not sufficient alone.

Creating a well-rounded gutload at home can seem daunting but can actually be fairly inexpensive and easy to make! Each time you go to the store get one or two staple vegetables on the list, then rotate them for something else next time. Make sure you wash all produce to eliminate pesticide residues and cut off the peel of fruits and vegetables as they have waxes and pesticides you can't wash off. The time from feeding insects, to your reptile eating those insects, should be 6-24 hours, and gutloading must be done before every feeding to be successful.

Staple Insect Gutloading Ingredients (Highest in calcium and other nutrients)					
					
Collard Greens	Turnip Greens	Mustard Greens	Escarole	Endive	Dandelion

Good Insect Gutloading Ingredients (Use as supplements to staples listed above)					
					
Sweet Potato	Papaya	Kale	Butternut Squash	Berries	Mango
Commercial gutloads: Repashy Superload, Cricket Crack, Super Chow					

Avoid These Ingredients (Low in calcium and/or high in phosphorus, oxalates, goitrogens)
Idaho potatoes, cabbage, iceberg lettuce, spinach, broccoli, tomatoes, corn, grains, beans, bread, cereal, meat, eggs, dog food, cat food, fish food, canned or dried insects, vertebrates (pinkies, lizards). While convenient, some commercially available gutloads (Farms Orange Cubes, Fluker Farms High Calcium Cricket Diet, Nature Zone Cricket Bites) are low in calcium, imbalanced and/or insufficient for good nutrition.

Supplementation
A powdered calcium supplement (without phosphorus) should be used to lightly coat the crickets 3-4 times weekly until 2 years of age and then 1-2 times weekly after that. A powdered calcium supplement like Repashy Calcium Plus should be used to lightly coat the crickets 3-4 times weekly until 2 years of age and then 1-2 times weekly after that.