



CONCISE CARE SHEETS

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GREEN KEEL-BELLIED LIZARD

INTRO

The Green Keel-bellied Lizard (*Gastropholis prasina*) is a slender, bright green or bluish-green lizard with a long prehensile tail that accounts for about 70% of its body length. Average-sized adults are about twelve to fourteen inches in total length, but some may be larger. It is native to the forests and woodlands of the coastal plains of the East African countries of Kenya and Tanzania. It is an arboreal species that is active during the day. It will eat a variety of insects and captive specimens have been known to eat smaller lizards.

GENERAL CARE & FEEDING

Green Keel-bellied Lizards are fairly easy to care for when provided a spacious enclosure with plenty of vertical space and narrow branches to climb on (see **HOUSING** section below). The coastal plains it inhabits are not hot, and rarely exceed the mid-80s. Moderate temperatures are required (avoid 85°+) and these lizards will be most active in the 70s. Its natural range has a wet season in April-May when humidity should be in the 80-90% range, and this lizard does like moist air. However, moderately high humidity can be maintained through most of the year. A good captive diet includes a variety of gut-fed and supplemented (calcium-dusted) insects like crickets, kingworms and roaches.

HOUSING

Green Keel-bellied Lizards require a large enclosure with good height. An adult pair would enjoy a 24x24x36-inch or larger cage. A mulch or coconut coir substrate may be used, but what is more important is the vertical space and its climbing branches as this tree-dwelling lizard will spend most of its time above the ground. That said, this is not a "canopy species"; it mostly inhabits the lower reaches of the forests and woodlands where it dwells and will utilize the floor space and may seek hiding places at the floor of the enclosure. Driftwood, manzanita branches, clean slender tree branches and vines may be combined with either real foliage or large plastic or silk plants to make the terrarium attractive and also provide hiding places. Vertical cork tubes or cork slabs leaned at an angle in the corners will provide refuges as well. A great deal of cover is essential.

Heat should be provided in the form of a basking lamp that is protected by a cage that prevents the lizards from coming into contact with the bulb. Bulb wattage should be chosen so that temperature at the warm basking end of the enclosure reaches the mid-80s, while the cooler end is closer to 70°F. Branches or "shelves" should be situated so that the lizards can thermoregulate by positioning themselves near the heat source, but care must be taken to ensure that they cannot come into contact with the bulb.

In addition to incandescent basking lamps, full-spectrum reptile lighting with moderate UVA/UVB levels are recommended.

HUMIDITY

As mentioned above, this lizard does enjoy moderately-high humidity. However, it should have a well-ventilated cage without excessive moisture. Its natural habitat has a rainy season in April and May, and those who wish to try to breed this species will want to keep it hotter and wetter during that time and then drop both temperature and humidity levels during our summer to cycle these lizards for reproduction.

HANDLING & ACTIVITY

These are active lizards during the day, but can also be timid and secretive. They are best left alone and kept as display animals not interactive pets.

HEALTH

Properly maintained Green Keel-bellied Lizards rarely encounter health problems. Careful attention to both temperature and humidity is essential to ensure that the environment will allow these lizards to thrive. Additio-

QUICK TIPS

- 70-85°F, with ideal temps in the mid to upper 70s. Must avoid temps above 80°F!
- Humidity 60-75% for much of year, although higher humidity may be used in April-May to simulate natural rainy season.
- Requires spacious vertical terrarium with numerous slender branches, vertical cork tubes, etc.

nally, their insect diet should be varied with prey being fed a good diet as well ("gut-loaded"), and insects should be regularly dusted with a quality reptile calcium supplement. Any issues that arise should result in an examination by a qualified reptile veterinarian.

SEXING

Male Green Keel-bellied Lizards have enlarged femoral pores that appear at a young age and become very obvious.