



CONCISE CARE SHEETS

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VIPER GECKO

INTRO

The Viper Gecko (*Teratolepis fasciata*) is a small gecko native to Pakistan. Its common name refers to the keeled “viper-like” scales on its body, and it is also sometimes referred to as the Carrot-tailed Viper Gecko due to the shape of its plump tail. It grows to a total length of about three-and-a-half inches. It is a hardy and easy to keep species that has long been a favorite of reptile keepers.

GENERAL CARE & FEEDING

Viper Geckos are terrestrial and inhabit rocky and arid areas seeking refuge from the daytime heat beneath rocks. They will thrive in simple enclosures or terrestrial desert terrariums. A variety of small insects will be accepted as food with the staple being appropriately-sized calcium-dusted crickets and roach nymphs. Viper geckos are known for tackling large prey for their size, but insect length of about the width of the head or smaller is suggested.

HOUSING

This small gecko does not require a very large cage. Many breeders utilize very simple enclosures like translucent plastic shoe or sweater boxes with a paper towel substrate and cracked upside-down clay flower pot saucers for hiding places. A more attractive natural desert enclosure (about 5-10 gallon in size for a pair or trio) can utilize reptile calcium stand and various rocks to create crevices and other hiding places. Tight spaces created by natural decor are preferred over larger hide boxes that don’t allow for confined retreats. It is important to keep the substrate clean and dry at all times. A small water dish that cannot be overturned should be offered.

Heat should be provided from beneath one end of the enclosure using a reptile heat mat controlled by a thermostat. The temperature range provided should allow the geckos to choose from higher temperatures (about 85-90°F) at the warm end, and cooler temperatures (about 75-80°F) at the cooler end. Hiding places should be available throughout the temperature gradient so the gecko doesn’t have to choose security over desirable temperature.

This is a nocturnal gecko that does not require any special lighting. Keepers may wish to use fluorescent lighting during the daytime for natural displays, but as the lizards are active at night it won’t assist in viewing them.

HUMIDITY

This gecko inhabits a very arid region and good ventilation and low to moderate humidity levels are required. A small “humid box” can be placed in one corner of the enclosure if issues develop with shedding during extremely dry periods.

HANDLING & ACTIVITY

These lizards rarely attempt to bite and, while very quick, can become quite tame. However, any handling must be extremely gentle due to their small size and fragile bodies.

HEALTH

Properly maintained Viper Geckos rarely encounter health problems. Careful attention to both temperature and humidity is essential to ensure that the environment will allow these lizards to thrive. Additionally, 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

Mature male Viper Geckos have prominent hemipenal bulges in the base of their tails. However, these geckos can be overfed and become obese,

QUICK TIPS

- Heat gradient with temperature 75-80°F at cooler end and 85-90°F at warmer end of the enclosure.
- Humidity low to moderate.
- Very easy to keep in both simple enclosures and small naturalistic desert terrariums.
- Feeds on small insects.

which may result in females having fat deposits in their tails that makes them appear to be male.

BREEDING

Viper Geckos are prolific breeders that reproduce readily in captivity. Some breeders cycle them by keeping them cooler and “hibernating” during the winter, but this is not necessary for successful reproduction.

A nest box with damp vermiculite should be offered to breeding groups. Typical clutches consist of one or two

eggs and are produced every two to three weeks for as many as twelve clutches per year. Incubation takes from 50 to 60 days, at temperatures in the low to mid-80s. It is essential that breeding females receive plenty of calcium supplementation, and some keepers may wish to house females without males for part of the year to give them a resting period.