



*Photo Credit: Natalie Jane Parker

Golden Tailed Gecko (*Strophurus taenicauda*)

Jeweled Eyed and from “Down Under”!

Also known as the Golden Spiny Tailed Gecko, or Jewel-Eyed Gecko, these geckos are relatively small to mid-sized, somewhat slender bodied geckos earning their names from their reddish, brick reddish-brown, to orangish or golden-yellow dorsal stripe from about their pelvic region through their tails. These central to eastern and northeastern Australian species of geckos are mostly nocturnal to crepuscular, inhabiting arboreal to semi-arboreal niches. Golden tailed geckos are most often an ashy gray, to whitish or bluish-gray with an overlapping granite appearing patterning of spots, mottling, and flecking. This species also has large, usually reddish to orangish colored irises as well. These geckos most often tend to seek refuge and food amongst loose tree bark, above ground vegetation, and other rock or tree crevices and cavities, and are fairly well adapted to somewhat dry conditions, and as with many other gecko species, have millions of microscopic structures on their lamellae toe pads known as setae that allow them to climb and cling onto both horizontal and vertical surfaces. Golden tailed geckos are a highly unique and less commonly seen species of gecko that would surely make for yet another unique and intriguing addition to nearly any novice to somewhat intermediate level reptile enthusiast's household!

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Suborder: Lacertilia

Infraorder: Gekkota

Suborder: Diplodactylidae

Family: Gekkonidae

Genus: *Strophurus*

Species: *Strophurus taenicauda*

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, golden tailed geckos can attain potential longevity of at least 8 to 10 years or more.

Distribution and Habitat

The Golden Tailed Gecko is an Australian to Indo-Australian species of gecko, occurring in a relatively small, disjunct range in eastern to northeastern Australia from northern New South Wales, to southeastern Queensland. Within this Australian and Indo-Australian range, this species of gecko can be found in a variety of semi-arid to semi-tropical environments, from dry forests and woodlands, to shrublands, semi-deserts, and more tropical forests and agricultural or cultivated areas and human habitations, where they often seek refuge in, and food amongst above ground vegetation, loose bark, rock crevices, small caves, and other tree or rock cavities or crevices.

Origin/History

Strophurus taenicauda (De Vis, 1886).

It is unclear as to when golden tailed geckos first entered the herpetocultural industry, as Australia would prohibit all of its wildlife exports since 1975. Geckos of this species that are available now probably are either descendants of unlawfully exported specimens after this date, or were descendants of founding stock from elsewhere.

Experience Level Required

Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Adult Golden Tailed Geckos typically reach about 2.5 to 3.5 inches snout to tail length, with the sexes being rather dimorphic in size, and females larger than males. Snout to vent length reaches up to 2.7 inches (SVL).

Housing and Enclosure

Enclosure System: Primarily Arboreal. Housing must be sealed and escape proof, and the size of the enclosure recommended will depend on the age and size of the gecko. A 10 to 15 gallon tall aquarium, terrarium, or similar enclosure is recommended. These geckos are primarily arboreal, and height is more important than floor space. Provide plenty of live or artificial plants, branches, cork bark, twigs, or other furnishings for ample climbing and hiding opportunities. Substrates that retain and hold some level of humidity are recommended, and naturalistic substrates can include play sand mixtures, crushed coconut fiber substrates, or similar substrates. A 50/50 peat or sand/peat/fiber moss substrate can also be used to help maintain humidity and hydration, as well as does daily or regular misting. They will drink the condensation from the enclosure's furnishings and walls, and a small water dish can also be provided, and must be kept clean, and will be occasionally used.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Golden tailed geckos have fairly simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it in moderated amounts can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, or UTH (under tank heating element). Ideal temperatures for these geckos range from about 85 to 90 degrees F. as the warm/basking temperatures, and about 85-90 degrees F ambient temperatures. Also be sure to provide a daily photoperiod or light cycle of at least 10 to 12 hours. Spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least twice

per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2 to 3 months. More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well. These geckos require moderate levels of relative humidity, which should fall at, or within 50 to 75%, but which may vary somewhat on the exact species.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous to Possibly Frugivorous; In the wild, relatively little is yet known about the diets of these geckos, although many different smaller insects, arthropods, and other invertebrates are likely eaten. They may also be partially frugivorous as well. In captivity, feed these geckos a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. These geckos also require additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation 1 to 2 times weekly or as otherwise directed for optimal health and development. This is in order to prevent Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD) and other growth and nutritional deficiencies. Their feeding frequency will depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed them, as obesity and other health related issues can become an issue. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

Golden tailed geckos can be calmer species of geckos than many other related species in the genus, but some can still be nervous or skittish. Therefore, handling should generally be limited to periods whenever necessary. As with some other species of geckos, they may chip or vocalize in response to being handled or when threatened. They can also drop their tails in caudal autotomy, and have also been known to eject a noxious smelling fluid to possibly deter avian and other predators. Handle any of these geckos gently and deliberately but do not drop or injure the animal. Take care to not grab your gecko by its tail or it may detach if your gecko perceives you as a predator or a threat.

****Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens****

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact:

Eric.S.Roscoe@gmail.com

Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility. We cannot make any claims or guarantees regarding any information in this care sheet therein. This care sheet may be reprinted or redistributed only in its entirety.

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