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“Assorted” /MabuYa Skink Species (*MabuYa sp.*), (*Eutropis sp.*), (*Lampropholis sp.*), and (*Trachylepis sp.*)

Inexpensive, but Underrated

In the pet trade, “assorted” skink species that appear regularly consist of several similar underrated genera and species which can vary considerably in size, coloration, and appearance depending on the species, age, sex, and reproductive status of the animal. Several of these genera, such as *MabuYa sp.*, have traditionally been used as waste bin taxonomy to place a number of species that do not fit well elsewhere, and is often under taxonomic reassessment. In general though, these are small to large sized skinks with a semi-elongated, cylindrical bodies, reduced to sometimes absent limbs, and smooth to semi-keeled scales. Ground color can range from blackish, tan, bronze, olive or olive-gray, light to dark brown, or bronze. Depending on the species, these skinks may have stripes, streaks, speckles, dashes, bands, or be mostly uniformly colored. During the mating and reproductive season, males of several species will also develop broad, vibrantly reddish to reddish orange heads and/or jaws as well. Juveniles and females of many species can also have vibrantly blue to pinkish colored tails as well. These skinks will readily practice caudal autotomy, which involves voluntarily dropping all or parts of their tails to distract potential predators, and which will regenerate several days to weeks later (although not as colorful or natural as the original tail).

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Suborder: Lacertilia

Infraorder: Scincomorpha

Family: Scincidae

Genus: *Lampropholis*, *Trachylepis*, *MabuYa*, and *Eutropis*

Species: *Lampropholis sp.**, *Trachylepis sp.**, *MabuYa sp.**, and *Eutropis sp.**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the correct care, these skinks can attain longevity of 5 to 10 years, or slightly more.

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Species

Each of the listed genera above consist of numerous species. However, some, among others, which may appear as “assorted skinks” in the pet trade can include, but are not limited to many similar species such as the Golden Skink or East African Brown Mabuya (*E. multifasciata*), Keeled Indian or Many Keeled Grass Skink (*E. carinata*), African Red Sided Skink (*T. perrotetii*), Five Lined or Rainbow Mabuya (*T. quinquetaeniata*) and (*T. margaritifera*), Cape Skink (*T. capensis*), African Striped Skink (*T. striata*), among others which may appear.

Distribution and Habitat

These skinks can occur in a variety of habitats depending on the species, which can include arid to semi-arid deserts and scrublands, tropical to sub-tropical and/or mixed forests, woodlands, woodlots, swamp and wetland margins, river and wetland margins, open grasslands, savannahs, and plains, rocky foothills, and other humid to semi-moist forested areas. Depending on the species and genera, these skinks generally range over much of Africa, the Middle East, and southern to southeastern Asia, although it would be difficult to go into specific geographic distributions of each of the species here. Further range information can be provided upon request.

Conservation Status

Conservation status dependent upon the species. Some species are IUCN Least Concern (LC). Some are IUCN Near Threatened (NT), Conservation Dependent (CD), Vulnerable (VU), Endangered (EN), to Critically Endangered (CE). Some Not Evaluated for the IUCN Red List (NE) or otherwise Data Deficient (DD).

Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner to Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

These skinks can vary in size depending on the exact species, but most species range from 2 to 8 inches. Some of the larger species however can reach up to 12 to 18 inches or greater.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Depending on the age, size, or species, anywhere from a 10 to 40 gallon long terrarium or similar sized plastic or glass enclosure should be used. Most species of these skinks can be housed in pairs or in multiples in accordingly larger quarters, but males of most species can become territorial and may fight. Provide these skinks with substrates that enable burrowing such as fine aspen shavings, cypress mulch, or orchid bark. Also be sure to provide a hide box and artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, cork bark, or logs for ample basking and hiding opportunities. Provide a small bowl or dish of fresh water as well, and be sure to clean and replace it at least two to three times weekly or if dirtied. Misting once to twice weekly will also help maintain humidity at around 60 to 80% that these skinks will enjoy.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

For basking, create a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure with an appropriate sized under tank heating pad, ceramic, or radiant heat emitter. Ideal temperatures for these skinks range from 75 to 85 degrees F on the cool side and about 90 to 95 degrees F on the warm, basking side. The precise temperature and humidity requirements will also vary somewhat depending on the species being maintained and their geographic distributions. Providing the correct amounts of UVA/UVB overhead incandescent and florescent lighting, and calcium-to-phosphorus ratios is essential for ensuring the health and overall well-being of North American skinks in captivity. Without UVA/UVB, or adequate amounts of it, they can be susceptible to the abnormal bone growth and development known as Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD), and other

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health and development maladies. Also be sure to 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.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous to Omnivorous to Carnivorous Depending on Species; In the wild, these skinks are primarily insectivorous, meaning they will eat insects, arachnids, worms, and other invertebrates, as well as occasionally other small vertebrates. In captivity, feed these species of skinks a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, fruit fly cultures, or waxworms. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. These skinks 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. Other feeder items, such as small, pre-killed rodents can also be given on occasion, but sparingly. Overall 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

Although many of these skinks can initially be skittish, they can become very bold and accustomed to regular human interaction, and can often even be hand fed. However, captive bred specimens are still quite infrequent, with most being wild caught. As such, many can still be nervous or skittish, especially when handling is attempted. Some very well acclimated specimens may be able to be handled or held gently for short periods of time, but are often faster moving and flightier species when in hand. Care should therefore be taken to not accidentally drop these animals when handling them. This is especially the case with these skinks, which may practice caudal autotomy by dropping all or portions of their tails when frightened or roughly handled. Overall, most of these species of skinks are hardy and easily kept and cared for, but as far as handling, are better suited for display and viewing (particularly larger adult male specimens). **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 the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

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.

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