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Bibron's Gecko and Turner's Gecko

(Pachydactylus/Chondrodactylus bibronii) and *(Pachydactylus/Chondrodactylus turneri)*

Thick Toed Geckos of Africa

A member of the thick toed gecko genus, the Bibron's and Turner's geckos are primarily nocturnal and crepuscular, where they are semi arboreal to semi terrestrial. They will also seek refuge during the day in or within rock slabs or crevices. Bibron's and Turner's geckos are medium sized to relatively large, stocky bodied gecko with a background color of brownish, grayish brown, to olive brown with numerous distinct lighter colored tubercles covering the back of their head, dorsum, and body. Darker banding or irregular markings are also present along the dorsum, and the eyes and pupils are large, lidless, and yellowish to reddish-brown with vertical pupils. Males, and sometimes females, can be territorial or aggressive towards one another under the correct conditions.

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

Family: Gekkonidae

Genus: Pachydactylus/Chondrodactylus

Species: *Pachydactylus/Chondrodactylus bibronii** and *Pachydactylus/Chondrodactylus turneri**

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Lifespan and Longevity

Captive longevity for this species, with the proper care and husbandry, can be expected to range from 5 to 10 years, or potentially more.

Distribution and Habitat

The Bibron's gecko is a fairly medium sized to large gecko species with a notable distribution over southern Africa to the Republic of South Africa. More specifically, this species also occurs in southern Namibia and Swaziland as well. The similar Turner's gecko has a broader range over

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much of southern Africa, including Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Within this range, the Bibron's and Turner's geckos occupy primarily arboreal to semi-arboreal environments, including tropical to sub-tropical forests, woodlands, cliff areas, and rural to suburban residential areas, or other areas of human habitation, often along tree trunks or interior and exterior walls and other sidings of houses and other buildings.

Conservation Status

Not Evaluated for the IUCN Red List (NE) or otherwise Data Deficient (DD). Other closely related species are IUCN Least Concern (LC), however.

Legal and Regulatory Status(*Subject to Change)

Consult with your local, municipal, and state ordinances and regulations for any ownership restrictions.

Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner.

Size

Bibron's and Turner's geckos are mid-sized to fairly large gecko species that can range from 4 to 9 inches as adults.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed and escape proof, and the size of the enclosure recommended will depend on the age and size of the gecko. For hatchlings up to 6 months or so, a 5 gallon tall aquarium, terrarium, or similar enclosure is recommended. Once a gecko reaches or exceeds six months or so, a 10 to 20 gallon tall terrarium or enclosure should be used. Bibron's and Turner's geckos are arboreal, and height is more important than floor space. Provide plenty of live or artificial plants, branches, cork bark, or other furnishings for ample climbing and hiding opportunities. Substrates that retain and hold humidity well are recommended, and naturalistic substrates can include sphagnum moss and fir shavings, natural moss, or similar substrates. To maintain humidity and hydration, daily or regular misting is necessary. 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, but will usually be seldom used.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Be sure to provide suitable temperatures and thermal gradients for Bibron's and Turner's geckos. Suitable ambient and cool end temperatures for these geckos should range from within 75 to 85 degrees F ambient temperature, with overnight, or nighttime temperatures of 65 to 75 degrees F being acceptable, and an 85 to 104 degree F basking area. These 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). Provide a daily photoperiod or light cycle of at least 12 to 14 hours as well. 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; In the wild, these geckos are insectivorous, and will eat a large array of insects and other small invertebrates. In captivity, feed Turner's and Bibron's 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

Bibron's geckos tend to be a fragile skinned species of geckos and are thus not the most hardy or handleable species. Therefore, handling should 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. Handle any of these geckos gently and deliberately but do not drop or injure the animal. As with many geckos and other lizards, they can also drop their tails when frightened or handled roughly. 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 the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

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