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## Flat Rock Scorpions (*Hadrogenes* spp.)

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### A Specialized Denizen of Rocky Areas

These scorpions have dorsoventrally flattened bodies adapted for wedging themselves into and slipping through rock cracks and crevices easily and efficiently. Flat rock scorpions are medium to large scorpion species ranging in color from blackish, brown, grayish, reddish brown, olive, to yellowish, sometimes with lighter colored chelae, legs, and/or telson. The tail, or metasoma, is long and slender in most species with a small sting (or aculeus), and is often held curled near their body. Other commonly kept species include the Giant Banded Flat Rock Scorpion (*Hadrogenes bicolor*) and Olive Keeled or Banded Flat Rock Scorpion (*Hadrogenes paucidens*). As with several other scorpion species, the flat rock scorpions are among the largest species of scorpions in the world, and are primarily burrowing to terrestrial. They include 16 species, some of which contain among the longest scorpion species worldwide. Flat rock scorpions are also sexually dimorphic, with males having much longer and more slender metasomas than females. As with many other scorpions, flat rock scorpions also contain properties within their exoskeletons that enable them to glow a turquoise bluish-green under a fluorescent UV light. These scorpions also possess additional sensory hairs on their claws, legs, and tail that enable them to detect the vibrations of potential prey through the air and the ground.

### Taxonomy

**Life:** All living, physical, and animate entities

**Domain:** Eukaryota

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum:** Arthropoda

**Subphylum:** Chelicerata

**Class:** Arachnida

**Order:** Scorpiones

**Family:** Hemiscorpidae

**Genus:** *Hadrogenes*

**Species:** *Hadrogenes* spp.\*

\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

### Lifespan and Longevity

Flat rock scorpions can attain longevity of 5 to 10 years or more if cared for correctly.

### **Distribution and Habitat**

Flat rock scorpions are a genus of slender built, medium sized to large scorpions indigenous to southern and eastern Africa, with more precise range and locality information being largely dependent upon the exact species. However, species of these scorpions generally range from South Africa, northward to Tanzania and Kenya. Within this range, these unusual species of scorpions can be found in semi-dry, semi-deserts, to savannahs, open woodlands and dry forests, to grasslands, where they occupy self-excavated burrows, burrows constructed by other animals, and underneath vegetation, rocks and rock crevices, logs, and other ground debris.

### **Conservation Status**

Not Evaluated for the IUCN Red List (NE) or otherwise Data Deficient (DD).

### **Legal and Regulatory Status (\*Subject to Change)**

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

### **Experience Level Required**

Intermediate/Moderate.

### **Size**

Flat rock scorpions are medium sized to large scorpion species, reaching anywhere from 4 to 9 inches on average.

### **Housing and Enclosure**

Provide a sturdy, secure, and escape proof terrarium or enclosure 5 to 10 gallons in size with a secure top for one or two adult scorpions. Several of the acrylic displays and enclosures that are now manufactured for housing arachnids, insects, and other invertebrates can also be used. Flat rock scorpions are a semi aggressive species. Although babies can be housed communally, adults are best housed individually. Acceptable substrate to use can include slightly moist pesticide play sand or aquarium sand, coconut fiber, or potting soil mixtures 3 to 4 inches in depth. Decorations and/or other cage furnishings and hide boxes, cork, rock, or bark slabs can also be included as well for additional retreats that these nocturnal to crepuscular and secretive scorpions prefer. Flat rock scorpions will also utilize additional rock crevices or rock slabs, as they are lithophilic, or rock dwelling species. A fairly small, shallow water dish can also be provided, and should be cleaned regularly. Maintain humidity at 70 to 75% with some sphagnum moss as well if needed.

### **Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity**

Most species of scorpions have simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it can be greatly beneficial for your scorpion's health, immune system, and overall wellness. Flat rock scorpions do best at room temperature between 75 to 85 degrees. 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). 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 Carnivorous;* In the wild, flat rock scorpions are primarily insectivorous, meaning they eat insects and other invertebrates. They will also occasionally eat smaller vertebrates as well if they can catch and subdue them. In captivity, these scorpions can be fed a

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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. This will promote optimal exoskeleton growth and development. Any uneaten food items should be cleaned and removed after a day or two. Their feeding frequency will depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed even invertebrates, as obesity and other health related issues can still become an issue with them. 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**

Flat rock scorpions are generally not an overly aggressive scorpion species, and are somewhat more reluctant to sting and more apt to pinch (although they will sting if provoked or harassed sufficiently). Flat rock scorpions can inflict a sting, but the venom from this species is typically weak to mild, causing pain and some localized swelling. Scorpions in general are fragile animals, and accidentally dropping one can result in the rupture of its internal organs and/or exoskeleton, causing death to your scorpion. Although the flat rock scorpion's venom is relatively mild and weak, with most being lesser than or just about equal to a bee sting, medical attention should still be sought from any apparent allergic reaction to a sting from this or any scorpion species.

**\*\*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](mailto:info@madisonherps.org)

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