



*Ashley Schultz

Green Anole (*Anolis carolinensis*)

America's Closest "Chameleons"

Also often known as the "American chameleons", green anoles are small iguanid lizards that have some color changing abilities, although they are not true chameleons (true chameleons are not indigenous to the Americas). The green anole is also the only native, or indigenous species of anole in the United States. Typically green or brown in color, these are small lizards with slightly enlarged toe pads, a long, pointed head, and pinkish red dewlap in which males use to signal territory and dominance. They will also utilize other bodily movements and gestures to signal territory and dominance as well, including head bobbing and pushups. Green anoles are a widely sold pet reptile species, but are often also unfortunately viewed as disposable. They can make for great, personable pets to keep for the pet owner or enthusiast with the right expectations and research.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Suborder: Lacertilia

Infraorder: Iguania

Family: Dactyloidae

Genus: *Anolis*

Species: *Anolis carolinensis**

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Lifespan and Longevity

Green anoles may attain longevity of 5 to 6 years or slightly more under the proper care.

Distribution and Habitat

Green anoles are indigenous to the Southeastern United States and some areas of the Caribbean. They may occupy nearly any habitat, but can often be found within trees and shrubs, as well as even urban and suburban areas.

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Conservation Status

IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner to Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Green anoles are fairly small lizards that reach about 4 to 8 inches as adults.

Housing and Enclosure

Provide a sturdy and secure enclosure that is escape proof. A minimum of a 20 to 30 gallon tall glass or other enclosure should be provided for these active, and arboreal anoles. Use a substrate that can retain moderate levels of humidity such as slightly dampened peat moss, untreated potting soil, orchid bark substrates, or sphagnum moss. Green anoles are arboreal lizards that will appreciate added climbing, basking, and hiding opportunities including natural or artificial foliage, rocks, vines, or branches. These anoles can be misted periodically for humidity and hydration or can be provided a shallow water dish that can be cleaned and replaced regularly at least two to three times weekly.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Create a sufficient day/night thermal gradient with full spectrum UVA/UVB lighting with ambient temperatures in the low 80's to mid-90 for a basking spot during the day, and mid-60 to mid-70 degrees F at night. 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 green anoles 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 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; Green anoles are primarily insectivorous in the wild, feeding on insects and other small invertebrates. In captivity, feed green anoles 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. Green anoles 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

Green anoles are active and fragile lizards that may tolerate some levels of handling. These lizards can also drop their tails if handled roughly as well. However, handling should be kept to a minimum when possible, making these lizards better suited as display 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

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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