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## Peter's Banded Skink (*Scincopus fasciatus*)

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### Middle Eastern Newcomers

The Peter's banded skink is a relatively small to mid-sized skink species that is quite new and recent to the pet industry. This is a somewhat small to medium sized skink species with smooth scales on a long, tapered body characterized by a yellowish, tan, to orange-yellow ground color, and several darker cross bands, stripes, or cross banding. The head, large dark eyes, and snout of this species are also fairly large and somewhat wedge shaped. Relatively little is still known about the Peter's banded skink's habits and natural history in the wild and in captivity, but it is known to be a nocturnal to crepuscular, burrowing species of skink that is known to be reclusive in nature and feeding on small insects and other invertebrates, and potentially some fruit and vegetable matter as well.

### 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:** Scincopus

**Species:** *Scincopus fasciatus*\*

*\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

### Lifespan and Longevity

Although the Peter's banded skink is still fairly new to the pet industry, this species, if provided the proper care, can potentially attain longevity of 10 to 15 years or more.

### Distribution and Habitat

Peter's banded skinks have a fragmented, discontinuous range over arid to semi-arid regions of northern Africa, including Mali, Niger, Chad, and Sudan, as well as portions of northern Nigeria, Mauritania, and Algeria.

### Conservation Status

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

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## **Experience Level Required**

Novice/Beginner to Intermediate/Moderate.

## **Size**

Most adult Peter's banded skinks range from 6 to 8 inches in length, and are fairly small skinks.

## **Housing and Enclosure**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. One to a pair of these skinks can be maintained in a 20 gallon long terrarium or similar sized enclosure, and they can be housed communally accordingly larger enclosures. They should be provided with a loose, sandy substrate that they can readily burrow into that is at least 6 to 8 inches in depth. These skinks will burrow, but are not found to be as specialized to a subterranean lifestyle as sandfish skinks, as commonly believed. A loose, non-toxic substrate such as play sand, or ground walnut shells will be acceptable substrates to use. Provide additional hide boxes and artificial foliage, driftwood, rock hides, or log hides for ample basking and other hiding opportunities. Provide a shallow, sturdy bowl or dish of fresh water as well. Misting once to twice weekly will also help maintain humidity at around 60 to 70%.

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

From what is known about Peter's banded skinks thus far, is that they are largely crepuscular to nocturnal, but should be provided with the appropriate overhead basking lights during the day and nocturnal red lights at night. 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 80 to 85 degrees F on the cool side and about 95 to 100 degrees F on the warm, basking side. Pete's banded skinks should be given overhead UVA/UVB incandescent and fluorescent lighting to do 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**

*Primarily Insectivorous to Omnivorous*; In the wild, Peter's banded skinks are primarily insectivorous to omnivorous, meaning they will ambush and consume small insects, arachnids, and other invertebrates they can catch and swallow. They may also eat some fruit or vegetable matter in the wild as well. Feed these skinks in captivity a mixed assortment of crickets, mealworms, superworms, roaches, and waxworms. Gut load these prey items by feeding them commercially available diets for added nutritional value. They may eat small, frozen-thawed rodents as well, but feed them these sparingly, if at all. Feed them these insects in a bowl or dish every other day. Some have also reported success in feeding their Peter's banded skinks small amounts of fruit and vegetable material in a dish, including but not limited to some fruit cocktail mixtures for Phelsuma (day geckos), chopped apples, peaches, melon, banana, kiwi, or other fruits. Provide calcium and vitamin D3 supplements in these skink's diets whenever possible as well. 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**

As with many skinks, Peter's banded skinks may become quite accustomed to regular human interaction, and can often even be hand fed. Many can also be handled for short periods of time, but are often a faster moving and flightier species when in hand. Care should therefore be taken

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to not accidentally drop these animals when handling them.

**\*\*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)

*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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