



*Chelsea Kingrey

Sudan Plated Lizard *(Gerrhosaurus major)*

Hard Plated Lizards

The Sudan plated lizard is a moderate sized, heavily built lizard. Sudan plated lizards can vary in color from grayish brown to reddish brown with distinctive bands of heavy, plate like scales giving this species its common name of “plated” lizard. The heavy, armored and girdled scales and plates that the Sudan plated lizard has serve several useful functions, including helping them to retain moisture and humidity, provide protection from harsh outer elements, and as additional protection from potential predators. They also still have lateral grooves along their sides to allow for respiration and expansion as well. As with many other lizards, plated lizards also can drop all or parts of their tails to escape and distract predators. These lizards are primarily diurnal (active during the day) and are primarily terrestrial. Sudan plated lizards can also dig and burrow well (including into termite nests and mounds), and can make for hardy and personable pets to keep.

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: Gerrhosauridae

Genus: *Gerrhosaurus*

Species: *Gerrhosaurus major**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, Sudan plated lizards can attain longevity of 10 to 15 years or more.

Distribution and Habitat

Sudan plated lizards are wide ranging lizards indigenous to rocky deserts, semi-deserts, sand dunes and coastal regions, grasslands and savannahs, and scrubland of Sudan and other areas of

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northern to eastern and southern Africa.

Conservation Status

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

Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner.

Size

Adult Sudan plated lizards are somewhat small to mid-sized lizards that can reach sizes of 15 to 28 inches, or slightly more.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling or juvenile Sudan plated lizards can be housed in a 10 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adult Sudan Plated lizards require a minimum of a 40 gallon long terrarium or enclosure or larger. These lizards can be maintained on a substrate of cage carpet or terrarium liner, play sand mixtures, or coconut fiber substrates. Avoid using substrates made from reptile bark that result in environments that are too humid. Provide a small dish of clean water, and change and clean it every several days, or sooner if fouled. Soaking them at least once weekly in lukewarm water for 15 to 20 minutes can also help raise their hydration. Provide ample basking and hiding opportunities by providing artificial foliage, driftwood, rock and rock slabs, or logs.

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 lizards range from 72 to 83 degrees F on the cool side/ambient temperature and around 90 to 95 degrees F on the warm, basking side. 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 Sudan plated lizards 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

Omnivorous; In the wild, Sudan plated lizards are omnivorous, meaning they will eat a variety of both plant and animal matter. In captivity, plated lizards are largely insectivorous, and will eat insects and other invertebrates. Plated lizards can be given a variety of feeder insects and other invertebrates of appropriate size, frequency, and proportion at least two to three times weekly. Feeder crickets, mealworms, waxworms, roaches, and other feeder insects, as well as some greens, fruits, and vegetable material such as dandelion greens and some commercially available omnivore and mixed fruit and vegetable diets can also be provided. They can also occasionally be given small pre-killed rodents of appropriate size, but sparingly. Providing calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation, as well as nutritional gutloading any feeder insects in these lizard's diets is essential for their health and well-being. 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.

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Handling

Sudan plated lizards are normally a docile species that can be handled and interacted with quite readily. As with any animal though, care should be taken to avoid dropping or overly restraining them to prevent injury.

****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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