



General Care Guide for *Rhacodactylus auriculatus*

Common names: Knob-head gecko, gargoyle gecko

Size: Up to about 4.5 inches SVL (125mm), about 8 inches total length. (Though some large individuals have been noted at up to 10 inches in total length.)

Distribution: Southern region of Grand Terre, which is the main island of New Caledonia

Description: The color and body pattern of this species is highly variable, but individuals are most often striped, mottled or banded with shades of brown being the tone. There are several color and pattern morphs available in the hobby today, including red and orange-blotched individuals, as well as red and orange-striped individuals.

Sexing: Males develop large hemipenial bulges, enlarged cloacal spurs, and prenal pores. Females have a slight post-anal bulge. *Rhacodactylus auriculatus* become sexually mature at about 12-15 months of age, but I wait until individuals are about 18 months of age to ensure the animal is of mature size and healthy enough to breed.

Habitat: This semi-arboreal gecko is generally found on the lower levels of forest vegetation (on short trees and shrubs).

Temperature: This species can be maintained at 77-82°F during the day and 72-75°F at night. I have found that gravid females readily use warmer “basking spots” (about 85°F) during the breeding season; presumably it aids with the egg formation process.

Diet: These geckos will eat a variety of insects, fresh mashed fruit, as well as all versions of the Repashy diet. (Babyfood however, has never been a staple or treat to my animals as it is often times too nutrient deficient!) Insects should be dusted with a good calcium and vitamin/mineral supplement such as Reocal/Herptivite or ReptoCal/ReptoLife. If using fresh fruit, a small amount of calcium and vitamin dust should be added to the mix.

Housing: Many suggest 10gallon aquariums for singles or a pair of these geckos, but I think that is far too little space for such a “large” gecko. I prefer to have all my animals in naturalistic cages, but this species has been found to do just as well in simpler set-ups.

Longevity: *R. auriculatus* are potentially long-lived. Captive specimens can live at least 15 years.