

# Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

## Blue Tongue Skinks (*Tiliqua gigas*/*Tiliqua scincoides*)

### General Information

Blue tongue skinks are a docile lizard from Australia, New Guinea, and many Indonesia islands. These are medium sized lizards and adults range from 14-26 inches in total length. Blue tongue skinks come from a wide range of habitats and can be found in arid to tropical environments. When these lizards feel threatened, they open their mouths and display their large bright blue tongues. Male and female blue tongue skinks look very similar and sexing is extremely difficult. Blue tongue skinks give birth to live young and can have between 5-25 babies. The gestation period for blue tongue skinks is 90-150 days. With proper care blue tongue skinks do well in captivity and you can expect them to live 15-25 years or more.

### Temperature and UV Lighting

Blue tongue skinks love heat and require temperatures under the heat light to range from 90-95 degrees and night time temperatures can range from 75-80 degrees. Proper temperature allows the blue tongue skink to properly digest food and the immune system to function normally. Blue tongue skinks require 10-14 hours a day of UVB light. This light enables the skink to produce vitamin D3. The vitamin D produced by UVB metabolizes the calcium in the lizards' diet. In general it's what makes a blue tongue skinks bones hard and without it they usually die. This process of inadequate UVB and calcium is called Metabolic Bone Disease. Also it is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB. If you're not sure if your UV light is still producing UVB, bring it in and we'll be happy to test the light for you.



### Housing

Baby blue tongue skinks can be kept in a 29 gallon cage but they grow quickly and will soon need larger housing. Adult skinks should be kept in a cage that is at least 36" x 18". You should also provide some type of hiding place to help your skink feel more secure.

### Bedding

Our recommendation for bedding is bark or some type of mulch. This type of substrate holds moisture very well, allowing a higher humidity. Cages that are too dry can cause dehydration and shedding problems. When your lizard is shedding we recommend that you mist the cage with water once a day to increase humidity. Dry shed is the result of low humidity and dry skin can cause the loss of toes if it is not removed. The bedding should be deep enough to allow your skink to dig and bury itself.

### Calcium

Blue tongue skinks also require a calcium and vitamin supplement. This supplement works with the UVB light allowing the lizard to receive the proper amounts of calcium and vitamins. This should be used every day as babies and reduced to 1-2 times a week as adults. Calcium is sold in a powder form and is sprinkled on the crickets, fruits, and vegetables that you feed your skink. When you feed your skink rodents no supplementation is needed. You should apply a very light coating to the food items, being careful not to waste any excess powder.

### Food

Blue tongue skinks are omnivorous feeding on mice, rats, snails, hard-boiled eggs, crickets, super worms, night crawlers, beef heart, fruits and vegetables. Ideal fruits and vegetables are: apples, bananas, strawberries, figs, peaches, mango, papaya, cantaloupe, grapes, blackberries, blueberries, collard greens, mustard greens, red leaf lettuce, green leaf lettuce, romaine lettuce, dandelion greens, hibiscus leaves and flowers, green onions, spinach, green beans, zucchini, and frozen mixed vegetables. A mixed diet of these food items, four to five times per week, is ideal and will ensure proper growth and health.

### Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary. Any fecal matter or left over food should be cleaned out several times a week. The bedding should be completely changed once a month and fresh clean water should be provided at all times. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner, we recommend Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat. Blue tongue skinks can be handled on a daily basis and usually tame down quite well. Always wash your hands before and after handling them.

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**Prehistoric Pets Inc. (909) 465-6085**

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