

Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

New Caledonian Crested Geckos

(*Rhacodactylus ciliatus*)

General Information

Crested geckos were thought to be extinct for over one hundred years, until they were rediscovered in 1994. These geckos are indigenous to the islands of New Caledonia, which is near Australia. Crested geckos are usually found on or near the ground hiding in leaf litter or near the base of trees. Female crested geckos are usually larger than males and adult crested can reach 8-10 inches in total length. Breeding crested geckos is fairly easy and they can be housed in small groups. Male geckos are aggressive towards other males and it is best to keep one male with several females. To sex your adult gecko examine the base of the tail, males will have a noticeable bulge. Crested geckos are usually sexually mature before they are one year old. Healthy female geckos will produce 1-2 eggs every month and can produce up to eighteen eggs in a year. When properly incubated crested gecko eggs hatch within 85 days. Crested geckos can drop their tails and they are unable to regenerate a new tail. Crested geckos are nocturnal and to fully enjoy them we recommend a red light for viewing at night. Red lights do not disturb nocturnal reptiles, just make sure to follow the temperature guidelines below when using any supplemental lighting.

Temperature and UV Lighting

Crested geckos thrive with daytime temperatures ranging between 65-82 degrees. Temperatures can drop to the mid 50's at night. Crested geckos are nocturnal species and UVB lights are not usually necessary for proper health. However, it is possible that wild geckos are active in the early morning and evening and are exposed to some UVB light from the sun. Our recommendation is to use UVB lights especially if live plants are used to decorate the cage. The UV light needs to be on 12 hours during the day and off at night. Also it is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB. Crested geckos do best with humidity maintained between 50-70 percent and occasional misting will work best.

Housing

Crested geckos should be kept in at least a 10 gallon or larger cage. Vertical cages are an excellent choice and you should provide multiple hiding spots. Cages can also be set up with live plants for a naturalistic appearance.

Bedding

Our recommendation for bedding is bark, coconut bark, or cypress mulch. These types of beddings hold moisture very well and duplicate their natural environment. It is possible for a gecko to accidentally ingest its bedding and cause some type of impaction in the intestines. We feel that this type of impaction is rare and we have never personally encountered this problem.

Calcium

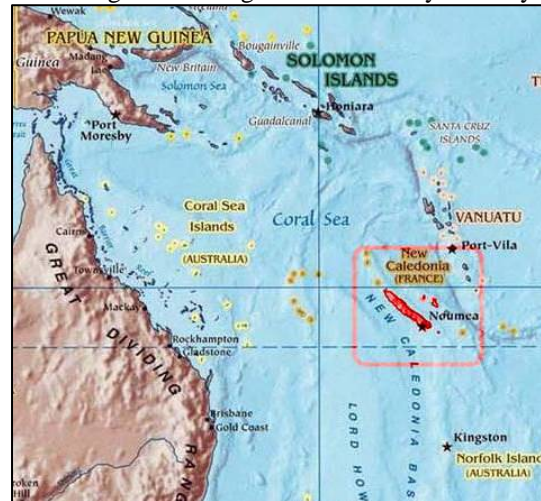
Crested geckos also require a calcium and vitamin supplement for proper health. This should be used every day as babies and reduced to 1-2 times a week as adults. Calcium is sold in a powder form and is sprinkled on the crickets and other insects. You should apply a very light coating to the food items, being careful not to waste any excess powder.

Food

Baby crested geckos should be fed appropriate sized crickets, mealworms, waxworms and any non citrus fruit baby foods. A mixed diet of these food items, five to seven 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. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner. We recommend Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat. Fresh clean water should always be provided. Crested geckos can be handled on a daily basis, just be careful not to drop them. Always wash your hands before and after handling them.



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