

CREATURE CARE SHEET

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Blue Tailed / Five Lined Skink *Mabuya quinquetaeniata*

These are Day Active Lizards.

Identification:

Young are jet black with yellow lines running from head to bright blue tail. Rusty red or orange may be present on the head as well. Colors gradually fade as animals mature. Adult males appear silver or golden brown in color with a bright or dark red tint all along the head.

Adult females have less red around the head and have black and narrow yellow series of lines running down their sides from head to tail, these markings vary somewhat regionally.

Substrate:

What ever suits you best. These lizards will thrive in simple or elaborate set ups. Newspaper works well enough and is easy to clean. It's kind of dull to look at and they will spend a lot of time hiding under it.

A layer of river pebbles covered with several inches of good "clean" backyard or potting soil also works well, but is more of a hassle to clean. The skink will burrow but will be visible when out for food/water or basking for most of the day (I think they are happiest when kept this way).

Water:

These lizards will learn to drink from a water bowl if it is provided, but it may take a while. Mist the lizard and its surroundings slightly every other day or so until you've seen it go to the bowl to drink. Make sure the water is clean and make sure the container is large enough to soak in but also easy for them to climb out of when they've had enough.

Lighting:

Provide a basking area on the hot side of the cage at around 43C, use a pile of rocks or something they can climb up on to vary their distance to the lamp above. I have used UV lighting with this type of skink recently, but I do not believe it is critical if you make sure to provide vitamin supplemented food items (mostly crickets and meal worms). However, I do believe that a UV light would possibly enhance the lizards coloration and make it feel more at home in its captive environment (and that's what were always going for).

Temperatures:

These skinks are found all over the United states from the New England area all the way to the Southern tip of Florida, they are very tolerant of cooler temps if able to warm up nicely afterward. Try to keep the hot side of the cage at 26.5 C with a hotter spot under the basking light (around 43C) and the cool side of the cage around 23 F or so. A night time temp drop is handled well considering they're found in areas where the daytime temps can be in the 30 C range and at night drop to just over 10C. Just make sure that they can warm up in the daytime under the heat lights. We recommend an under tank heater of some kind (heat mat) and an overhead incandescent bulb (with a reflector over the basking area, both places should be on the hot side of the cage for maximum effect.

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Humidity:

These lizards are found in areas with wide humidity ranges. If you can keep live leafy plants growing in the cage then the humidity is ok. If the glass in the tank fogs up, its too humid. If you mist the lizard every day or two, humidity will not be too low.

Vivarium:

You can start with a 10 gallon (50 litre) aquarium or similar and work up to larger sizes as the skink gets larger. Be careful about making it too hot in there if you use a small tank. We recommend a 20 or 30 gallon "long" tank for max effect. Hot side with undertank heat mat and a basking spot under an incandescent bulb. Cool side with the water bowl. Place hiding places and plants or debris in both sides of the cage to allow for a good comfy place to feel warm/cool and safe.

Diet:

Skinks in the wild eat anything that walks or flies by as long as they can fit it into their mouths. Avoid caterpillars, spiders, wasps and bees. Somehow in the wild they avoid the poisonous ones, captive ones might eat them and get sick Reptile Multivitamins and calcium supplements should be dusted over crickets and meal worms every other feeding. Or, follow instructions on the supplement container. Locusts, crickets and mealworms can all be fed but variety is the key.

Notes:

These are amazingly active little predators, they always are doing something and are just fun to watch. They do not like being handled. Keep this to an absolute minimum. Tails break off easily and grow back looking not as nice as before. Great pets to watch. Also will learn to take bits of food or meal worms from tongs or fingertips. Will head to its burrow in the evening and overnights, but will emerge in the morning to look for food and bask in the "sun". Very easy to keep and very interesting little animals.