**Tropical Skink Facts**

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| **Average Adult Size** | up to 18 inches long, depending on species |
| **Average Life Span** | up to 15+ years with proper care depending on species |
| **Diet** | blue-tongues - omnivore; African fire skink - carnivore |

*Will reach adult size in 1 to 3 years, depending on species and under ideal conditions; upgrade habitat size as your reptile grows.*

**Diet**

A well-balanced tropical skink diet consists of:

* Blue-tongued species are omnivores and eat 60% plant matter, such as leafy green vegetables and bell peppers, and 40% insects, including gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets, roaches and mealworms.
* African fire skinks are carnivores and eat a variety of insects including gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets, roaches, waxworms and mealworms. An occasional frozen/thawed pinkie may be given as a treat.

**Feeding**

Things to remember when feeding your tropical skink:

* Fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should be available at all times.
* Feed daily.
* Feed juveniles daily, adults every other day.
* Sprinkle food with calcium supplement daily and a multi-vitamin supplement once or twice a week.
* Vegetables and fruits not eaten within 24 hours should be discarded.

**Housing**

* Size - Appropriately sized and shaped habitat to accommodate normal behavior and exercise.
* Habitat - Provide a hiding area and 2 to 3" of substrate for skink to burrow in. Maintain greater than 70% humidity by misting as needed every day.
* Substrate - Use a mulch type such as coconut fiber or reptile bark.
* Temperature - Daytime temperature gradient (95°F for the warm end and 85°F for the cool end) nighttime temperature of 70 to 75°F. Use an incandescent light or ceramic heater as primary heat source.
* Lighting - UVB rays with full spectrum lighting for 10 to 12 hours a day is required. An incandescent day bulb can be used for basking area during daylight hours only; can use a ceramic heater or nocturnal or red incandescentat all hours.
* House adult male skinks separately and do not house different reptile species together. May be able to house male/female pair together.

**Normal Behavior**

* Most tropical skinks are semi-nocturnal and will spend a portion of daylight hours hiding.
* Skinks are not naturally tame; significant time must be spent with them to maintain ability to handle them, but once tame, some enjoy frequent interaction.
* Skinks have a powerful bite if highly stressed or untamed.

**Habitat Maintenance**

* Thoroughly clean and disinfect the habitat at least once a week: place skink in a secure habitat; scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all traces of bleach smell; dry the tank and furnishings completely and add clean substrate.

**Grooming & Hygiene**

* Skinks regularly shed their skin; ensure humidity of habitat is at appropriate level to allow proper shedding. To facilitate shedding, bathe in a large container that allows the skink to immerse its entire body or provide a shed box, a hide box with sphagnum moss, that will aid in the shedding process.

**Health**

**signs of a healthy animal**

* Active and alert
* Clear eyes
* Body and tail are filled out
* Healthy skin
* Clear nose and vent
* Eats regularly

**Red Flags**

* weight loss or decreased appetite
* mucus in mouth or nose
* swelling
* lethargy
* bumps, sores, or abrasions on skin
* labored breathing
* paralysis of limbs
* abnormal feces

***If you notice any of these signs, contact your veterinarian.***

**Common Health Issues**

| **Health Issue** | **Symptoms or Causes** | **Suggested Action** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gastro-intestinal disease | Runny stools, caked or smeared stool around the vent area and loss of appetite caused by bacterial or parasitic infection. | Consult your veterinarian. |
| Metabolic bone/vitamin deficiency | Inability to absorb calcium due to insufficient UVB light or improper calcium/vitamin D. If untreated, can lead to a disorder characterized by deformities, softened bones, swollen limbs and lethargy. | Consult your veterinarian and provide ample UVB lighting and the proper amount of calcium/vitamin supplements. |
| Respiratory disease | Labored breathing and mucus in the mouth or nose. Can be caused by a habitat that is too cold or damp. | Consult your veterinarian and ensure habitat is the proper temperature. |