



CAL ZOO'S REFERENCE SHEET



BLUE TONGUE SKINKS

Latin name	Tiliqua gigas	Maximum length	20 inches
Native to	Indonesia	Approximate life span	Undocumented

GENERAL INFORMATION

Although you might think all Blue-Tongue Skinks are exclusive to Australia, this Blue-Tongued Skink (*Tiliqua gigas*) is native to Indonesia. Blue-Tongues are a diurnal lizard, meaning they are active during daylight hours. Once accustomed to your touch, Blue-Tongues are very docile. But, until they get used to you they may become defensive and try to bite. This is a normal survival instinct and should be no cause for alarm. Just exercise common sense when handling new lizards. Unless you plan to breed Blue-Tongues, it is not recommended you house them together. They may fight and you could end up with a lizard with missing toes.

ENCLOSURE

20 gallon or larger sized aquarium is adequate. It is always a good idea to make your initial enclosure purchase with the adult size of your animal in mind. *T. gigas* are the largest Blue-Tongue Skinks growing up to 20 inches. Therefore an enclosure of 40+ gallons is highly recommended.

SUBSTRATE

Aspen bedding, pine shavings, reptile sand, cage carpet or newspaper are all acceptable substrates. Blue-Tongues are messy lizards, so keep this in mind when choosing a substrate. You may want to opt for one that is easier to clean over one that is more natural looking.

TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

Keep ½ of the floor heated with a Zoo Med UNDER-TANK HEATER. Provide a hiding place on the unheated side. They prefer a cooler hiding place. Daytime temperatures should range from 80 - 85°F with a basking area up to 95°F. Nighttime temperatures should drop to 75 - 80°F. The hiding place should be slightly moist but not wet. You may also want to provide a constantly damp area of sphagnum moss or damp sponge. Blue-Tongues tend to have problems completely shedding their feet and toes. If left alone, this skin will build up and cut-off circulation. Infections or toe-loss may result. If dried skin is found on the toes, simply allow the lizards to stand in room temperature water for 15 - 30 minutes to allow the skin to soften up. If, after this period, the skin is still not soft enough to easily remove, repeat the soaking process. Never try to force the skin off as you may injure your skink.

HEATING

Use a Zoo Med REPTITHERM® UNDER TANK HEATER (U.T.H.). Do not turn the tank heater off, leave it on 24 hours a day and use it in conjunction with a Zoo Med RHEOSTAT™ for easy heat control. You may also want to provide a Zoo Med REPTICARE® ROCK HEATER positioned beneath a Zoo Med REPTI™ BASKING SPOT BULB to give your lizard the high temperature basking area it needs.

LIGHTING

UVB lighting is required for Blue-Tongue Skinks. The Zoo Med REPTISUN 5.0™ with its high UVB and UVA output is an excellent choice. All reptiles and amphibians need a photo period. A plug in timer (for your lights only, do not use a timer for your heating devices) works well to develop a regular photo period (light cycle) of 8 - 10 hours of light, 14 - 16 hours of darkness. Reptiles and amphibians cannot see the red light spectrum, so a Zoo Med INFRARED HEAT LAMP is ideal for nighttime viewing and heating of your skink.

FOOD & WATER

Blue-Tongue Skinks are omnivorous, and will require a varied diet. The diet should consist of melons, pears, apples, tomatoes, grated squash, cooked eggs, crickets, mealworms, canned dog or cat food and occasionally pinkie mice. Their favorite food is snails. If you offer snails, be sure they are pesticide-free. Lightly dust the food with Zoo Med REPTIVITE® every-other feeding. Your skink may only want to eat every-other day, but provide it with food every day. Be sure not to feed your skink the same food consistently. Provide it with a varied diet. The water bowl should be large and shallow. Your skink should be able to easily get to the water and with its short legs this could be difficult if faced with a tall bowl. Clean the water daily (or more often if necessary).

NOTES

Always wash your hands before and immediately after handling reptiles and amphibians. Never leave live food long term with reptiles & amphibians. They can inflict severe harm, even kill your pet. If your animals take some time to eat or you feed them at night, leave a slice of potato, carrot or dry dog food for the live food items to eat. Your local pet shop is an ideal source for reptile and amphibian related books and supplies. Please make sure you read and become familiar with any instructions provided with reptile support products you may purchase. For further information on reptiles and amphibians we recommend you read *REPTILES MAGAZINE* and *THE VIVARIUM*. California Zoological Supply hopes you have enjoyed reading this reference sheet on Blue-Tongue Skinks. We hope that our guidelines will assist you with the care or possible purchase of your new pet.

This sheet may be copied in its entirety only.