

# **Captive Care Of The Leopard Gecko** *(Eublepharis macularius)*

## **Quick Reference Guide**

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### **Appearance**

Leopard geckos are among the largest geckos with adults reaching a length of around 8 or 9 inches. Most leopard geckos have a yellow background with brown spots covering the adults. Juvenile geckos have a striped pattern that fades to the spotted pattern with age.

### **Housing**

An aquarium is a perfect home. Since they are a terrestrial species, a long aquarium is better than a high one. A 20 gallon long aquarium is adequate for 3 or 4 geckos. Make sure that you only have one male per aquarium because males will fight each other. The bedding can be anything from sand to newspaper. Sand creates the most natural setup, and you can buy playground sand from any hardware store. Rocks and logs can make the area more natural looking and they provide your lizards with places to climb. A hide box is also recommended for each lizard to sleep.

### **Lighting and Temperature**

Leopard geckos are a nocturnal species so no form of UV lighting is necessary. A simple spotlight with the appropriate wattage bulb can provide both daytime light and heat. Daytime temperatures should be around 90 and the nighttime temps can go down in the low 70s. When I say 90 degrees I mean this should be the temperature directly under the spotlight. This will allow the rest of the cage to remain from anywhere to the 80's to room temperature. I have problems with under-tank heating pads and hot rocks as they don't raise the air temperature in the tank and their surfaces often produce extremely high temperatures, and can burn your pets.

### **Feeding and Watering**

Leopard geckos are relatively easy to feed because they will thrive on insects. Crickets along with occasional wax worms and mealworms make a good diet. Adult geckos can also be fed an occasional pinkie mouse. Juveniles can be feed every day and adults every other day. Supplementation is a must for leopard geckos. Two supplements should be used: one that is just calcium/D3 and another that is a reptile multivitamin. Juveniles should be supplemented at every feeding and adults at every other feeding. Insects can be coated with these supplements. If your geckos don't mind being handled it may be a good idea to feed them in a separate container. This reduces the chance of impaction from ingesting the substrate in the aquarium and allows for you to monitor how much each gecko is eating.

A shallow water dish should be provided at all times and changed daily to stop bacteria and fungus growth. Allowing leopard geckos access to a moist area is a good idea that assists in shedding. Even though they come from arid climates their burrows tend to have moderate humidity. People can supply this humidity by moistening the area under their hide boxes. Make sure that the overall cage isn't wet or overly humid.

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