



MISFITS RESCUE



Crested Gecko Care Sheet

Overview

Crested geckos are arboreal lizard's native to New Caledonia. They are generally docile, handleable reptiles suitable for beginners when their environmental and dietary needs are met. This care sheet follows welfare principles consistent with RSPCA guidance, including appropriate housing, nutrition, health care, and enrichment.

Lifespan

With correct care, crested geckos typically live 15–20 years.

Housing

Crested geckos require a vertically oriented enclosure to allow climbing. The minimum recommended enclosure size for one adult is 45cm (W) x 45cm (D) x 60cm (H), though larger enclosures are strongly encouraged. Juveniles may be housed in smaller enclosures temporarily but must be upgraded as they grow.



Enclosures should be well ventilated and escape-proof.

Substrate

Suitable substrates include paper towel (for juveniles or quarantine), reptile-safe soil mixes, or bioactive substrates. Loose substrates must not be dusty and should be spot cleaned regularly. Substrate should be fully replaced as needed to maintain hygiene.



Temperature

Crested geckos do not require intense heat. The ambient daytime temperature should be maintained between 20–24°C, with a slight nighttime drop to 18–20°C. Temperatures above 27°C can be dangerous and potentially fatal. Deep heat projector bulbs are recommended as they do not omit light so can be used overnight.

Heat, if required, should be provided using a thermostat-controlled heat source.

Lighting

Crested geckos require a natural day/night cycle. Low-level UVB lighting (2–5%) is recommended to support natural behaviours and vitamin D3 synthesis, though they can survive without UVB if dietary supplementation is correct.



Lights should be on for 10–12 hours per day.



Humidity

Humidity should range between 50–70%, with a daily misting allowing levels to rise temporarily to 80–90%. Enclosures must be allowed to dry out slightly between mistings to prevent respiratory and skin issues.

Furnishings and Enrichment

The enclosure must include climbing branches, cork bark, vines, and dense foliage (live or artificial) to provide security and enrichment. At least two hiding areas should be provided. Enrichment should encourage natural climbing and foraging behaviours.

Diet

Crested geckos should be fed a commercially prepared crested gecko diet (CGD) as their primary food source. This should be mixed according to manufacturer instructions and offered 3–4 times per week for adults, and daily for juveniles.

Live insects such as appropriately sized crickets or locusts may be offered 1–2 times per week as enrichment. Insects should be gut-loaded and dusted with a calcium supplement.

Water

Fresh drinking water must always be available in a shallow dish. Crested geckos will also drink water droplets from enclosure surfaces after misting.

Handling

Handling should be kept to a minimum, especially for juveniles. When handled, support the gecko fully and avoid grabbing. Crested geckos may drop their tails as a defence mechanism; this is permanent.



Health and Veterinary Care

Common health issues include metabolic bone disease, dehydration, retained shed, and mouth infections. Any signs of lethargy, weight loss, poor appetite, or abnormal behaviour should be assessed by a qualified reptile veterinarian.

New animals should be quarantined for a minimum of 30 days.

Cleaning and Maintenance

Spot-clean daily to remove waste. Food dishes should be cleaned after each use. A partial deep clean should be carried out weekly, with full enclosure cleans completed as required. Always use reptile-safe disinfectants.

Legal and Welfare Considerations

Owners and carers have a legal duty of care under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to meet the animal's five welfare needs. This includes providing a suitable environment, appropriate diet, ability to exhibit normal behaviour, appropriate companionship, and protection from pain, suffering, injury, and disease.