

Leopard Gecko (*Eublepharis macularis*)

Origins and background: Leopard geckos, which are primarily nocturnal, originate from the rocky steppe deserts and mountains of Eastern Iran, South-Eastern Afghanistan, Pakistan and North-Western India. This is a member of the Eublepharidae gecko group, with movable eyelids and no sticky pads for climbing, instead possessing claws on the toes. Adults have a ground colour of light to dark yellow, patterned with an individually unique arrangement of brown to black spots and blotches. Juveniles differ from the adults by having contrasting stripes of colours which break up with age.

Adult Size and Life Span: Adults can reach a length of 25 – 30cm (15-18") and if properly cared for, can live to around 10 years old, gaining adult size within 2 – 3 years of birth. More than one can be kept in a group, but it is essential they are similar size, as any smaller individuals may be consumed. It is better to keep one male with a group of females, to avoid territory disputes and fighting.

Diet and Feeding: In captivity, leopard geckos will readily eat brown and black (when adult) crickets, locusts and mealworms. If you can guarantee the area has not been treated with insecticides, any grassland can be swept for a selection of native insects such as grasshoppers, moths and hairless caterpillars. Adults may also take the occasional pinkie. Crickets can be fed every day, but mealworms only once a week. All food must be dusted with a calcium and vitamin D₃ supplement such as Nutrobal to ensure healthy development of bones. Fresh, clean water should be supplied daily.

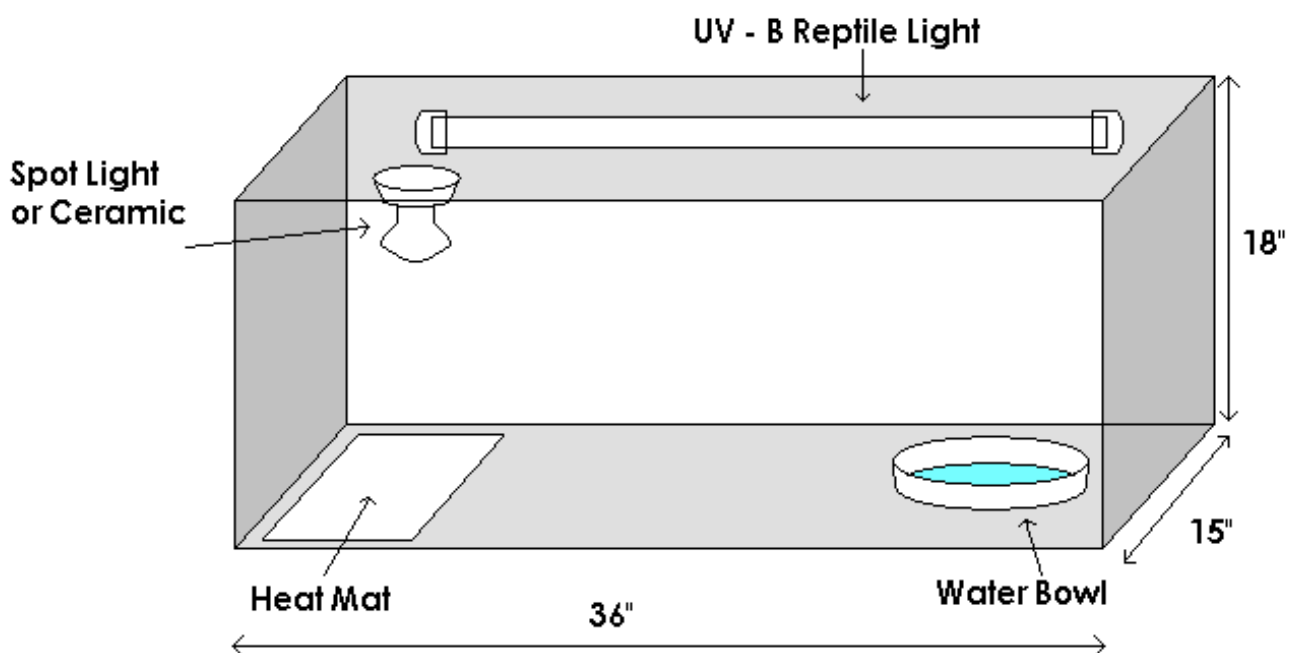
Vivarium Set Up: It is recommended that a 36" x 15" x 18" vivarium is obtained to house your gecko(s). A basic layout is shown in the diagram. Within this set up, there must be:-

Swallow Aquatics Caresheet

Heating: Daytime temperatures must reach 80 – 85°F (26.7 – 29.4°C), cooled at night to 70 - 75°F (21.1 – 23.9°C). This is achieved via spot bulbs, heat mats or infra-red ceramic bulbs at the hot-end of the vivarium. Ambient temperatures should be maintained at night using one of these methods, and a thermostat may be required for control. The water bowl must be placed in the cooler end of the vivarium.

Lighting: A UV-B bulb is not essential but will ensure that vitamin D₃ is correctly synthesised and the animal will maintain a strong skeleton. Use a Reptiglo 5.0 bulb, across the back of the vivarium, for 10 -12 hours per day as a simulation of natural daylength.

Substrate and Decoration: Leopard geckos require a dry, desert habitat, which can be achieved via beech chip, gravel or sand. Use rocks, wood and cork bark to create caves and interest for climbing. Some desert plant species can be used e.g. cacti, succulents and spurges.



Further Information and Advice: It is recommended that you read and gain as much information as possible before purchasing your gecko. Books and reliable websites are good sources, or alternatively ask a member of staff. Phone advice is available 9am-6pm, 7 days a week on 01953 718184.