

GECKODAILY CLASSROOM RESOURCES · SPECIES FACT SHEET

Crested Gecko

Correlophus ciliatus

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Suborder	Family	Genus	Species
Animalia	Chordata	Reptilia	Squamata	Gekkota	Diplodactylidae	Correlophus	C. ciliatus

NATIVE RANGE

Southern New Caledonia (South Pacific), including the Isle of Pines

SIZE

15-20 cm (6-8 in) total length

LIFESPAN

15-20 years in managed care; wild lifespan not well documented

ACTIVITY PATTERN

Nocturnal (most active after dark)

HABITAT

Humid tropical forest with dense foliage and vertical surfaces for climbing

WEIGHT

35-55 g (adult)

DIET

Omnivore - ripe fruit, nectar, and insects

CONSERVATION STATUS

Vulnerable (IUCN)

Reproduction

Oviparous. Females lay clutches of 2 eggs roughly every 2-3 weeks through the breeding season; incubation takes about 60-90 days.

Notable reproductive biology

First described in 1866, the species was not seen again for over a century and was presumed extinct - then rediscovered on the Isle of Pines in 1994 after a tropical storm. It is a frequently cited case study in the 'Lazarus species' phenomenon: species rediscovered after being thought extinct.

Key adaptations

- **Adhesive toe pads.** Rows of microscopic hair-like structures (setae) under each toe use weak intermolecular (van der Waals) forces to grip almost any surface, including smooth glass - a very different solution to climbing than sticky mucus or hooked claws.
- **Prehensile tail - with a catch.** The tail can grip branches like a fifth limb while climbing. Unusually for a gecko, once a crested gecko's tail is lost to autotomy it does not grow back, so keepers and researchers use 'tail-less' vs 'full-tail' as an easy visual age/history cue.
- **Eyelash-like crests.** Fringed ridges of skin run from above each eye back over the head, giving rise to the nickname 'eyelash gecko'. Their exact function is debated, but camouflage among leaf litter and branches is the leading hypothesis.
- **Colour change with activity.** Individuals often appear darker by day and lighten ('fire up') when active at night, a pattern linked to activity level and stress rather than simple camouflage.

Did you know?

Because the entire modern pet and research population descends from a small number of geckos collected after the 1994 rediscovery, captive crested geckos have relatively low genetic diversity compared to many other reptiles kept in large numbers.

Sources: IUCN Red List; Wikipedia (Crested gecko); Bauer & Sadlier, The Herpetofauna of New Caledonia (2000). Bold terms are defined in the GeckoDaily Reptile Biology Glossary.