

GECKODAILY CLASSROOM RESOURCES · SPECIES FACT SHEET

African Fat-Tailed Gecko

Hemitheconyx caudicinctus

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Suborder	Family	Genus	Species
Animalia	Chordata	Reptilia	Squamata	Gekkota	Eublepharidae	Hemitheconyx	H. caudicinctus

NATIVE RANGE

West Africa, from Senegal east to northern Cameroon

HABITAT

Dry Sahel and savanna, rocky woodland and scrub; shelters in burrows and under surface debris

SIZE

18-25 cm (7-10 in) total length

WEIGHT

45-75 g (adult)

LIFESPAN

10-15 years in the wild; up to 20 years in managed care

DIET

Insectivore - crickets, roaches and other invertebrates

ACTIVITY PATTERN

Nocturnal (shelters by day, forages at night)

CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern (IUCN)

Reproduction

Oviparous. Females typically lay 1-3 eggs per clutch; incubation takes roughly 6-12 weeks depending on temperature.

Notable reproductive biology

As in the leopard gecko, incubation temperature influences hatchling sex in this species - another example of temperature-dependent sex determination within the same family, Eublepharidae.

Key adaptations

- **Shared family traits with the leopard gecko.** As a fellow member of Eublepharidae, this species has movable eyelids and lacks adhesive toe pads, relying on claws for grip on rock and soil rather than climbing smooth surfaces.
- **Tail as an energy store.** The thickened tail stores fat reserves, letting the gecko go extended periods without food - useful in a seasonally dry habitat where insect prey is not always abundant.
- **Caudal autotomy and regrowth.** The tail detaches readily when grabbed and regenerates, though the replacement tail is typically shorter and more bulbous than the original.
- **Cryptic colouration.** Alternating brown and tan/beige banding across the body breaks up its outline against leaf litter and rocky substrate, reducing detection by predators such as snakes and birds of prey.

Did you know?

Fat-tailed geckos are one of only a handful of gecko species with true movable eyelids - a trait shared with the leopard gecko but almost unheard of in the broader gecko family tree.

Sources: IUCN Red List; Wikipedia (African fat-tailed gecko); Animal Diversity Web. Bold terms are defined in the GeckoDaily Reptile Biology Glossary.