

Gargoyle Gecko Species Fact Sheet

Rhacodactylus auriculatus — a printable classroom reference

Common name	Gargoyle Gecko
Scientific name	Rhacodactylus auriculatus
Family	Diplodactylidae
Native range	Southern New Caledonia (Province Sud), humid forest and scrub
Habitat	Semi-arboreal — branches, bark, foliage, and forest floor
Activity pattern	Crepuscular to nocturnal
Adult length	7–9 inches (18–23 cm), including tail
Adult weight	Roughly 35–60 grams
Lifespan (captivity)	Often 15–20 years with good care
Diet	Omnivore — powdered meal-replacement diet as staple, insects, fruit, and nectar
Reproduction	Oviparous; clutches of 2 soft-shelled eggs, multiple clutches per season possible
Distinct feature	Bony, horn-like crests on the head, resembling carved gargoyle statues

Key Adaptations

- **Tail regeneration:** unlike its close relative the crested gecko, a gargoyle gecko can regrow a lost tail. The original tail is bumpy and stores fat reserves; a regrown tail is smoother, shorter, and more bulbous.
- **No sticky toe pads:** gargoyle geckos lack the adhesive lamellae crested geckos use to climb glass, relying instead on small claws to grip bark, branches, and foliage.
- **Bony head crests:** raised protrusions behind the eyes and along the skull give the species its name and vary a great deal between individuals.
- **No eyelids:** like most geckos (but unlike the eublepharid geckos such as leopard geckos), gargoyle geckos have a fixed transparent scale over each eye that is cleaned by licking rather than blinking.
- **Vertical pupils:** narrow to a thin slit in bright light and open wide in the dark, typical of a nocturnal hunter.

Conservation Note

Gargoyle geckos are endemic to a limited range in southern New Caledonia, where ongoing habitat pressure is a genuine conservation concern. Decades of successful captive breeding mean the pet trade runs almost entirely on captive-bred animals rather than wild collection.

Sources

Compiled from published herpetological references and current reptile-keeper husbandry consensus. Intended as a general educational overview, not a substitute for veterinary or scientific literature.

The Gargoyle Table — geckodaily.vercel.app/gargoyletable — Free to print, copy, and distribute for educational use.