

GECKODAILY CLASSROOM RESOURCES · SPECIES FACT SHEET

Leopard Gecko

Eublepharis macularius

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Suborder	Family	Genus	Species
Animalia	Chordata	Reptilia	Squamata	Gekkota	Eublepharidae	Eublepharis	E. macularius

NATIVE RANGE

Afghanistan, Pakistan, northwestern India, western Nepal, and parts of Iran

SIZE

20-28 cm (8-11 in) total length

LIFESPAN

6-10 years in the wild; commonly 15-20 years in managed care

ACTIVITY PATTERN

Nocturnal / crepuscular (active at night and twilight)

HABITAT

Rocky, dry grassland and semi-desert with sparse vegetation

WEIGHT

45-80 g (males); 35-70 g (females)

DIET

Insectivore - crickets, roaches, beetles, other insects and small arthropods

CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern (IUCN)

Reproduction

Oviparous. Females lay 1-2 eggs per clutch, several clutches per season. Incubation lasts roughly 35-90 days depending on temperature.

Notable reproductive biology

Sex is determined by incubation temperature rather than sex chromosomes alone - a process called temperature-dependent sex determination (TSD). Warmer incubation temperatures tend to produce more males.

Key adaptations

- **Movable eyelids.** Unlike most geckos, leopard geckos belong to a small group (family Eublepharidae) that kept movable eyelids, letting them blink and close their eyes - most other gecko families instead have a fixed transparent scale over the eye that they lick clean.
- **No adhesive toe pads.** Leopard geckos lack the sticky, hair-like toe structures (setae) seen in climbing geckos. Instead they have small claws suited to walking on rock and sand, reflecting a fully ground-dwelling lifestyle.
- **Tail as a fat reserve.** The tail stores fat rather than muscle for locomotion. A well-fed gecko has a thick tail it can draw on during food shortages; a thin tail is a visible sign of poor body condition.
- **Caudal autotomy.** Like many lizards, the tail can detach at a fracture plane when grabbed by a predator. The stump reforms and a new tail regrows, though it never fully matches the original in shape or pattern.
- **Nocturnal vision.** A high density of rod cells and a vertical pupil that opens wide in the dark let leopard geckos see effectively in very low light.

Did you know?

The genus Eublepharis is thought to have appeared roughly 10 million years ago and is one of the oldest surviving gecko lineages - a living example of a trait (movable eyelids) that most later geckos lost.

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