

GECKODAILY CLASSROOM RESOURCES · SPECIES FACT SHEET

Mourning Gecko

Lepidodactylus lugubris

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Suborder	Family	Genus	Species
Animalia	Chordata	Reptilia	Squamata	Gekkota	Gekkonidae	Lepidodactylus	L. lugubris

NATIVE RANGE

Extremely wide - coastal Indo-Pacific from the Maldives and Sri Lanka across Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands to as far east as the Galapagos; also introduced in parts of Central America and the Caribbean

HABITAT

Coastal vegetation, forest edge, and human settlements; commonly found on walls and trees near artificial light

SIZE

7-10 cm (3-4 in) total length

WEIGHT

Under 5 g (adult)

LIFESPAN

10-15 years in managed care

DIET

Omnivore - small insects and other invertebrates, nectar, ripe fruit

ACTIVITY PATTERN

Cathemeral (active during both day and night, with peak activity around dusk)

CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern (IUCN)

Reproduction

Parthenogenetic - reproduces without fertilisation by a male. All individuals are female; each egg develops into a genetic clone of its mother. Two eggs are typically laid every 2-3 weeks.

Notable reproductive biology

This is one of the clearest vertebrate examples of obligate parthenogenesis: no confirmed fertile males are known in the species. A single female accidentally introduced to a new island can found an entire new population on her own - a major reason this is one of the most widely distributed gecko species on Earth.

Key adaptations

- **Obligate parthenogenesis.** Because reproduction does not require finding a mate, a single individual carried in cargo, on driftwood, or in plant material can establish a viable new population - a key reason for the species' huge range.
- **Adhesive toe pads.** Like many climbing geckos (but unlike leopard and fat-tail geckos), mourning geckos have setae-covered toe pads that let them scale smooth vertical surfaces, including glass and walls.
- **Tolerance of disturbed habitat.** The species thrives around human structures and artificial lighting, which attracts insect prey - an adaptation to human-modified environments rather than untouched wilderness.
- **Vocal communication.** Mourning geckos produce audible chirping sounds used in social interaction, unusual among lizards, most of which communicate primarily through visual displays.

Did you know?

The common name comes from its all-female biology: early observers associated its calls with 'mourning' the absence of males, though the species reproduces successfully without them.

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