
Crested Gecko

Correlophus ciliatus

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Family: Diplodactylidae

Characteristics: Length 8 to 9 inches. Rows of soft, spiny scales, called crests run from wedge shaped head over large eyes down body to base of tail. Webbed legs and digits. Toes with small claws and tip of tail covered in small hairs called setae. Hair-like projections, resembling eyelashes found above eyes. They must use their long tongues to moisten eyes and remove debris from their eyes since they lack eyelids. Prehensile tail aids in climbing and can be shed to deter predators. Lost tail will not grow back but the loss isn't as harmful to this gecko as to other geckos. Many colors including grey, brown, red, orange and yellow occur naturally along with spots, straight stripes and tiger-like stripes.

Behavior: May change color throughout the day having a duller color while sleeping. Typically solitary animals. Can be handled once acclimated but if stressed or not handled gently may drop tail. Arboreal and will climb smooth, vertical surface with use of pads on toes. Pad on tail helps jumping from branch to branch. Very vocal and may make barking or squeaking noises. Primarily nocturnal and spends daylight hours sleeping in a secure spot in a tree.

Reproduction: Breeds readily in captivity. After breeding once, female lays 2 eggs every 4-6 weeks for upwards of 8-10 months. Eggs hatch in 60-150 days and heat determines sex of the embryo. Newly hatched will not eat until after first shed (3-5 days) relying on yolk sack for nutrition. After 8-10 months female goes through a "cooling" cycle usually prompted by winter changes in temperature. If cooling cycle is not controlled female will lay eggs continuously, through their entire life.

Diet: Wild: Omnivores and Frugivores eating insects, nectar, fruit.

Zoo: Powdered gecko food.

Conservation: Long believed extinct, this species was rediscovered in 1994. Now extremely popular in the pet trade, permits for export have been discontinued except for breeding and study in the US and Europe. Other than black market trade, the largest threat is the Little Fire Ant recently introduced to New Caledonia. The Fire Ants prey on geckos in great numbers and also compete for arthropods.

FYI: AKA: Eyelash gecko or Guichenot's giant gecko. "Eyelashes" are actually spines used to protect their eyes. Have a network of hairs on the bottom of each finger to allow them to walk and climb on very smooth surfaces. Have specialized eyes to see in the dark. Their pupils are vertical, slit-shaped with slightly lobed edges and can see color.



Range & Habitat:

Rain forest canopies of New Caledonia islands east of Australia.



Lifespan: 15-20 years in captivity.

Special Adaptations:

Prehensile tail with shedding capability for deterring predators.

IUCN Conservation Status:

Vulnerable

