

# *Basiliscus plumifrons*



## Scientific Classification

Kingdom:	Anamalia
Phylum:	Cordata
Class:	Reptilia
Order:	Squamata
Family:	Corytophanidae
Genus:	<i>Basiliscus</i>
Species:	<i>B. plumifrons</i>

## Binomial Name

***Basiliscus plumifrons***

[Cope, 1875](#)<sup>[2]</sup>

The **plumed basilisk** (*Basiliscus plumifrons*), also called commonly the **green basilisk**, the **double crested basilisk**, or the **Jesus Christ lizard**, is a [species](#) of [lizard](#) in the [familyCorytophanidae](#). The species is native to [Central America](#).

## Geographic range

The natural distribution of *B. plumifrons* ranges from eastern [Honduras](#), through [Nicaragua](#) and [Costa Rica](#), to western [Panama](#).<sup>[3][4]</sup>

## Taxonomy and etymology

The plumed basilisk's [generic](#) name *Basiliscus* is taken from the legendary reptilian creature of European mythology which could turn a man to stone by its gaze: the [Basilisk](#).<sup>[5]</sup> This name derives from the [Greek](#) *basilískos* (βασιλίσκος) meaning "little king".<sup>[5]</sup> This generic name was given in [Carl Linnaeus'](#) 10th edition of *Systema Naturae*.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Description



Male plumed basilisk

The plumed basilisk is one of the largest basilisk species, with an average snout-to-vent length (SVL) of approximately 10 inches (25 cm). Including the tail, it can reach 3 feet (91 cm) in total length. Adults are brilliant green, with bright yellow eyes, and small bluish spots along the dorsal ridge. Males have three crests: one on the head, one on the back, and one on the tail, while females only have the head crest.<sup>[6]</sup> Juveniles are less conspicuously colored, and lack the characteristic crests.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Diet

The plumed basilisk is [omnivorous](#) and eats [insects](#), small [mammals](#) (such as [rodents](#)), smaller species of lizards, [fruits](#) and [flowers](#).<sup>[8]</sup>

## As prey

The [predators](#) of *B. plumifrons* include [birds of prey](#), [opossums](#), and [snakes](#).

## Reproduction

Sexually mature females of *B. plumifrons* lay five to fifteen [eggs](#) at a time in warm, damp [sand](#) or [soil](#). The eggs hatch after eight to ten weeks, at which point the young emerge as fully independent lizards.

## Behaviour

[Male](#) plumed basilisks are very [territorial](#); a single male may keep land containing a large group of [females](#) with whom he mates. Most plumed basilisks are skittish, and do not tolerate much handling when kept in captivity.

*B. plumifrons* is able to run short distances across water using both its feet and tail for support, an ability shared with other basilisks and the [Malaysian sail-finned lizard](#), *Hydrosaurus amboinensis*. In [Costa Rica](#), this has earned the plumed basilisk the nickname "Jesus Christ lizard". It is also an excellent swimmer and can stay under water for up to 30 minutes.