

Rhacodactylus auriculatus



Scientific Classification

Kingdom:	Anamalia
Phylum:	Cordata
Class:	Reptilia
Order:	Squamata
Suborder:	Serpentes
Family:	<u>Diplodactylidae</u>
Genus:	<u>Rhacodactylus</u>
Species:	<i>R. auriculatus</i>

Binomial Name

Rhacodactylus auriculatus

Bavay, 1869

Synonyms

- *Platydactylus auriculatus*
Ceratolophus hexaceros
Gecko ceratolophus

The **gargoyle gecko** or **New Caledonian bumpy gecko** (*Rhacodactylus auriculatus*) is a [species](#) of [gecko](#) found only on the southern end of the island of [New Caledonia](#). Its [habitat](#) is threatened by [deforestation](#) on the island. This gecko, along with several other [Rhacodactylus](#) species are being considered for protective measures by [CITES](#), which would put restrictions on their exportation. This gecko was first described by Bavay in 1869.

Description

This reptile gets its common name from the cranial bumps that give the appearance of horns or ears; In fact, *auriculatus* is Latin for "ears" or "eared", depending on the case.^{[2][3]} Other characteristics of this gecko include a thin [prehensile tail](#) which will regenerate if it drops off,^[4] as well as small toe pads. Although these geckos have the ability to grip vines, branches, and other obstacles, most do not have the ability to climb sheer surfaces, such as glass. As small as one inch long (from snout to vent) and weighing 3 grams at hatching, it reaches an average length of 7 to 9 inches and 60 to 70 grams in weight. They are considered a small to medium size gecko.

They occur in many colors, including varying shades of greys, browns, white, yellow, orange, and red, with varying patterns of blotches and striping. They are commonly [captive bred](#) for particular traits of pattern and color, like most captive geckos.

Behavior

Gargoyle geckos are [nocturnal](#) and [arboreal](#), making their home in scrub [forests](#). The female lays two [eggs](#) per clutch, which hatch 60 to 90 days after they are laid. The female can lay eight or nine clutches per year.

In captivity, it is fairly easy to hand tame these geckos, because they adapt to a human touching them, and know food comes when one is around sometimes.

They have been observed in captivity to be very adventurous, and some will appreciate a change up in tank decorations. They can propel themselves

almost three times their body length to reach a vine or tree branch, yet their feet do not have as much traction as other gecko's feet do, so they slip every now and then, making them seem clumsy. Moving about is no problem to them, as long as their skin is kept moist, it will stretch and accommodate their movements. When handling one, one should pay close attention to it as they are very quick.

In captivity

Gargoyle geckos make interesting [terrarium](#) animals. In captivity, these geckos will accept [fruit](#) mashes, fruit and powdered gecko diet (mixed with water). Crested gecko diet is commonly given as a primary food source. Gecko food can be purchased from companies that specialize in it, such as Repashy or Pangea; these foods have the correct nutritional balance of vitamins and minerals, which is not found in basic fruit purees. As treats, these geckos Sometimes(Depends on the individual lizard) accept live foods such as [crickets](#), feeder roaches, and [waxworms](#)., which should be gut loaded, or dusted with vitamins and calcium as extra precautions.

Rhacodactylus species are relatively new to being kept in homes and there is much still to be learned, since many species were thought to be extinct. Adult gargoyle are housed in a twenty-gallon, tall tank, or something of similar size. Gargoyle gecko males are always housed separately or as a part of a breeding pair or trio with females, as males housed together will always fight. Juveniles are known to be very aggressive towards cage mates as well. Cannibalism of cage mates' tails, toes and other extremities is not uncommon. Except during the breeding season, they are housed separately, no matter the gender, age, or size.

Maintaining a humidity level around 50-60% is ideal. Live plants help maintain a high level of humidity.

Gallery

Red striped morph juvenile gargoyle gecko



Juvenile gargoyle gecko

