

# African Fat-tailed Gecko

*Hemitheconyx caudinunctus*



## CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

The African fat-tailed gecko is a tropical gecko from West Africa. Tropical geckos can lighten or darken their skin tone to blend into their environments. The African fat-tailed gecko also has moveable eyelids and vertical pupils.



### Is an African fat-tailed gecko the right companion animal for you?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

- I have an appropriate location and space for a gecko.
- I can commit to handling geckos as little as possible.
- I feel comfortable providing live food to a gecko.
- I can commit to providing proper care for this fat-tailed gecko.
- A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

If you answered "Yes" to these statements, an African fat-tailed gecko may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for an African fat-tailed gecko and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

**Average Size** 5 to 8 inches long

**Life Span** 15+ years with proper care

**Diet** Provide a variety of insects, including appropriate size live food, such as gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets, butterworms, waxworms, and mealworms

**Feeding** Feed adults every other day; juveniles and breeding females daily; provide a multiple vitamin/mineral supplement once or twice a week and calcium daily

**Housing** Due to the varied sizes and growth rates of reptiles, and their individualized needs, we recommend you consult your qualified reptile veterinarian and a book on this species to determine it's specific housing requirements

Size – Appropriate size and shape habitat for an adult gecko to accommodate normal activity.

Habitat – Thick branches for climbing; tall, dense non-toxic plants for hiding in addition to a hiding area elevated off the habitat floor

Temperature – Temperature gradient of 85° to 90° F. for the warm end and 70° to 75° F. for the cool end; radiant heat is recommended; use an incandescent light or ceramic heater

Substrate – Use pelleted or mulch-type; geckos may eat their substrate; if they do, switch to something they cannot eat, like paper or cage carpet, or an edible substrate

Humidity – High humidity must be maintained in the habitat at all times

Lighting – Provide fluorescent light for 10 to 12 hours a day

Water –May not drink directly from a bowl and rely on moisture on plants and in collecting pools in the tank; mist the habitat several times a day to collect moisture on plants and in collecting pools; provide a large, shallow bowl of chlorine-free water for drinking

House males separately, one to a tank; multiple females in one tank are fine; do not house different species of reptiles together

### Recommended Supplies

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat with secure lid | <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer    | <input type="checkbox"/> Fluorescent light                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basking rock or log     | <input type="checkbox"/> Substrate      | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamin/mineral supplement           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mist bottle             | <input type="checkbox"/> Heating source | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-toxic plants, branches           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book about geckos       | <input type="checkbox"/> Humidity gauge | <input type="checkbox"/> Incandescent light or ceramic heater |

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### Normal Behavior and Interaction

More docile than other tropical geckos; when accustomed to their new owner, they are often content to rest on an arm or hand; African fat-tailed geckos are nocturnal and will be active at night

### Habitat Maintenance

Change water daily; remove feces from habitat daily; mist frequently to maintain humidity; Thoroughly clean the tank at least once a week: set tropical gecko aside in a secure habitat; scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all smell of bleach; add clean substrate

### Grooming and Hygiene

Always wash your hands before and after touching your gecko or habitat contents to help prevent *Salmonella* and other infectious diseases; Geckos regularly shed their skin; ensure enough humidity to allow for proper shedding

### Signs of a Healthy Animal

- Active and alert
- Healthy skin
- Clear eyes
- Eats regularly
- Clear nose and vent
- Body and tail are rounded and full

### Common Health Issues

Health Issue (alpha)	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Gastro-intestinal Disease	Runny stools, caked or smeared stool around vent area; loss of appetite.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
Metabolic Bone/Vitamin Deficiency	If untreated, can lead to a disorder characterized by deformities and softened bones. Swollen limbs and lethargy.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
Respiratory Disease	Labored breathing, runny nose, swollen eyes. Can be caused by too cold temperatures.	Ensure proper lighting, water, and basking conditions. If condition persists, consult your veterinarian.

### Red Flags

- Weight loss or decreased appetite
- Swelling
- Bumps, sores, or abrasions on skin
- Paralysis of limbs or tail
- Mucus in mouth or nose
- Lethargy
- Labored breathing
- Abnormal feces

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian.

### Sources

*Geckoes: Biology, Husbandry, and Reproduction* by Friedrich-Wilhelm Henkel  
*The Gecko Owner's Guide to a Happy Healthy Pet* by Audrey Pavia

**Note:** The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.