

**New Caledonian Giant Gecko**  
*Rhacodactylus leachianus* ssp

Family: Gekkonidae

Locale: New Caledonia; *R. l. leachianus* on Grand Terre (GT), *R. l. henkeli* on Pine Island

Habitat: Arboreal; forest and scrub

Average Size: *R. l. leachianus*: 14-17 in (212-279g), *R. l. henkeli*: 9-12 in (115-220g).

Average Lifespan: 20+ years in captivity

Activity: Nocturnal

Captive Care: Tank or screen enclosure at least 20" high, or 2 foot glass cube with screen

lid, or 24in tall screen chameleon cage or 40gal aquarium as tall as possible, with a screen lid for maximum circulation. Plants with thick trunks for climbing; both angled and horizontal branches (at least as thick as the gecko is wide) for climbing and basking (do not clutter tank with too many); cork bark tubes to mimic tree hollows (one for each member of pair); clean water available at all times in shallow dish; mist daily. Humidity should be 50 -70%. A heating pad or a low-wattage light on the outside of the cage can provide warmth.

Diet: Omnivorous; commercially available food preferred, commercial diets including Pangea Fruit Mix Complete, and Repashy Crested Gecko diet. Insects such as crickets, mealworms, flies should also be offered at least occasionally. Require Calcium/D3 supplementation in their diet, and should be dusted on insects. If commercial diet is not available, baby food (fruit flavored): apples, peaches, pears, apricots, any flavor aside from citrus fruits may be used. If using primarily baby food, mix 9 parts fruit, 1 part meat (turkey or chicken) and calcium/D3 supplement. Feed small amounts relative to their size either daily or every other day (plastic water bottle lids make good dishes for the baby food mixture). Adjust amount offered based on quantity consumed.

Temperature: Thrive in temperatures ranging from 70-85° F, but never more than 85°.

Lighting: Nocturnal, so do not need special lighting. If the terrarium is located near a window, natural light could be sufficient, but never place tank in direct sun.

Temperament: Known to be quite tame if handled regularly. Care should be taken when removing from cage as they may bite if threatened (and the bite hurts).

Notes: Lost tail will regenerate. Keep in pairs, not mating groups. Never house 2 males in same enclosure. May show TDS (but not critically tested). Require places to hide.

References:

Bergman, J and Hamper, R. 2015. New Caledonian Giant Gecko Care Sheet. Accessed August 01, 2016 at <http://www.reptilemagazine.com/Care-Sheets/Lizards/New-Caledonian-Giant-Gecko/>

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Seipp, R. & Henkel, F. 2000. Rhacodactylus, Biology, Natural History & Husbandry. Chimaira Buchhandelsgesellschaft mbH. Frankfurt am Main. 173 pp.

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Photo: Eileen Underwood



Range map: Shannon Magers