



Long-Tailed Grass Lizards

Takydromus sexlineatus

INTERMEDIATE · 8–12 IN ADULT · 5–7 YR LIFESPAN · DIURNAL · DISPLAY ONLY · SOUTHEAST ASIA

Picture a pencil-thin lizard whose tail dwarfs the body it's attached to, sprinting through grass faster than your eye can follow. That's *Takydromus sexlineatus*, a small diurnal lizard from the rainforests, mangroves and wetlands of Southeast Asia. They're striking, busy all day, and genuinely fun to watch. They're also fast, fragile, and quick to drop that tail. Treat this one as a display animal, because that's what it is.

AT A GLANCE	
Ambient temp	78–85 °F
Basking spot	88–92 °F
Night drop	68–72 °F
Humidity	60–80%
UVB	5.0 at 10–12 in, required
Diet	Crickets, fruit flies
Feeding	Every 1–2 days
Adult size	8–12 in, mostly tail
Lifespan	5–7 years



Long-tailed grass lizards turn up on NARBC vendor tables. On any of them, most of the total length is tail, not lizard.

Photo: Jason Alexander / iNaturalist · CC BY

01

Fast, Fragile, Hands Off

Takydromus is a watching animal. They're quick, high-strung, and built like a blade of grass, and a startled one goes from still to gone in a blink. They shed the tail under pressure, and the regrown one is a stub that never matches. **Never grab or restrain one by the tail.** Move them cup-to-cup instead of hand-to-hand. Wild-caught imports are still common in the trade, so buy captive-bred where you can and quarantine anything else.

02

Housing: Footprint First

Every stage wants a horizontal footprint. An adult belongs in 24×18×18 at minimum, and 36×18×24 is where they start looking like themselves: dense planting, room to sprint. A rack is a grow-out at best, and only if the light and gradient come with it; past the juvenile stage it stops working at all. Groups work only in a big planted enclosure, never with two adult males, and crowding costs tails and meals. A hatchling clears an 8×8×12 tub through a gap you'd swear was too small.

STAGE	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	NOTES
Hatchling	8×8×12	12×12×18	Very small and fast; secure the lid and every seam around it.
Juvenile	12×12×18	18×18×18	Heavily planted; dense grass cover gives them somewhere to bolt to.
Subadult	18×18×18	24×18×18	Groups need real space and dense cover; one adult male, watch for bullying.
Adult	24×18×18	36×18×24	Sprints rather than climbs, so floor space beats height. Plant it heavily.

Enclosure minimums and preferred sizes from Habitat-OS life-stage guidance. Horizontal footprint first at every stage; these are ground sprinters.

03

Heat & Light

Give them a gradient: 78–85 °F ambient, a basking spot at 88–92 °F, and a fall to 68–72 °F overnight. The night drop is part of the care, not a lapse in it. Heat from above with a lamp, never from a heat rock. UVB is not optional here. Sit the 5.0 tube above the mesh, 10–12 in over the basking perch, and never closer than 10 in. Glass and most plastics block UVB outright, and mesh costs you a quarter to a half of what's left. Replace bulbs on schedule; output fades long before the light does.

04

Humidity & Water

Hold humidity at 60–80%, and get there with misting rather than a sealed box. These are rainforest, mangrove and wetland animals: they want damp air and dry lungs, which takes daily spray and real ventilation working together. Most ignore a standing water dish and drink droplets off leaves and glass instead, so mist morning and evening and leave time for them to come out and drink. Keep a shallow dish anyway. At this size, dehydration moves fast.

05

Substrate and Planting

Build what the lizard actually uses: a moisture-holding base of coco fiber and leaf litter, then plant it until you have to hunt for the animal. Tall grasses, pothos and thin twiggy cover give them running lanes at ground level and stems to rest on. Skip loose sand entirely. It does nothing for humidity and it's an impaction risk for a small mouth chasing fast prey. Springtails and isopods in the substrate keep a planted setup honest.

06

Feeding

They eat like something with no reserves, because that's what they are. Small crickets and flightless fruit flies, offered every 1–2 days, with prey no wider than the space between their eyes. Dust with plain calcium, no D3, no phosphorus, at most feedings. UVB is their D3 source, so the only other powder is a multivitamin: weekly while growing, twice monthly for adults. Feed in the morning when they're warm and hunting. An adult off food for more than a couple of days is a problem, not a phase.

07

Health Red Flags

A healthy grass lizard is a blur. One that sits still with its eyes shut in the middle of the day is telling you something. Read the hips and tail base: sharp hip bones or a pinched tail base mean the animal is burning reserves it doesn't have. Watch for sunken eyes and wrinkled skin (dehydration), tremors or a weak grip (calcium), and stuck shed ringing the toes and tail tip. Any of these gets a reptile vet, and quickly. Small animals crash fast.

Husbandry data: Habitat-OS species library. Structure follows the NARBC show handout series. Every animal is an individual - when in doubt, ask the breeder at the table or a reptile veterinarian.