



Bibron's Geckos

Chondrodactylus bibronii

BEGINNER • 6–8 IN ADULT • 10–15 YR LIFESPAN • NOCTURNAL • SOUTHERN AFRICA

Walk up on most geckos and they freeze. Bibron's answers back. This is a chunky, rock-climbing gecko out of southern Africa, built like a brick with toes, and it's one of the easiest lizards in the hobby to keep alive. The honest headline: it's a watching animal, not a handling one. It bites hard for its size, and it means it.

AT A GLANCE	
Difficulty	Beginner
Adult size	6–8 inches
Lifespan	10–15 years
Ambient temp	75–82 °F
Basking spot	85–90 °F
Night low	65–72 °F
Humidity	30–50%
UVB	Low output, beneficial
Feeding	Insects every 2–3 days



Bibron's geckos turn up on the gecko tables at NARBC shows, sold as hardy, vocal southern Africans that spend their lives on rock.

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01

The Gecko That Shouts

Bibron's is the loud one. Corner it and you get a bark, a chirp, or a full open-mouthed complaint, and the whole performance comes from a lizard the length of your hand. It is robust, hardy and famously forgiving of a new keeper's mistakes, which is why it earns a beginner rating. It is not a lap pet. The bite is strong for the size and this gecko uses it, so keep handling brief and purposeful.

02

Housing: Think Vertical, Think Stone

Every stage wants height over floor space. This is a rock gecko, and the enclosure should look like it. Stack slate or cork slabs flat against the back wall, leaving tight gaps to wedge into. Adults need 24×18×24 as a floor and do better at 36×18×24. Seat the stack on the enclosure bottom, never on loose substrate, so it cannot shift. House them one to a box. Adults fight over territory, males especially, and the loser pays in toes and tail.

STAGE	MINIMUM	PREFERRED	NOTES
Hatchling	8×8×12	12×12×18	Hardy from day one; height matters more than floor space.
Juvenile	12×12×18	18×18×18	Rock-dwelling. Give stacked slate or cork, seated flat and stable.
Subadult	18×18×18	24×18×24	Strong bite for its size. Handle carefully, and only when you must.
Adult	24×18×24	36×18×24	Large-bodied rock gecko: dry, moderate humidity, hardy, long-lived.

Minimums and preferred sizes follow Habitat-OS life-stage guidance. Every stage prioritizes vertical, climbable space.

03

Heat & Light

Run a gradient: 75–82 °F ambient, with a basking surface at 85–90 °F measured on the stone itself, not in the air.

Bibron's is a night animal that takes its warmth from rock, so mount the heat overhead and run it through a thermostat.

Let nights fall to 65–72 °F. **Never use a heat rock.** A gecko pressed to warm rock has no reflex to pull away from one that burns. Low-output UVB is beneficial; run it alongside supplements, not instead of them.

04

Dry Air, One Damp Corner

Keep it dry. Target 30–50% humidity, and remember that a wet, stagnant box does more harm here than a dry one.

Ventilation matters more than misting. Still, give one damp corner, a hide packed with moist moss and refreshed often, so a shedding animal has somewhere to soften up. A shallow water dish stays in full time. Many geckos drink droplets off the glass rather than from a dish, so a light mist in the evening earns its place.

05

Substrate, Furniture and the Lid

A dry, diggable base works best. Topsoil blended with a little play sand does it, or a bioactive mix if you plant the enclosure. Keep young animals off loose sand, which comes back as an impaction. Rough surfaces earn their keep, since cork, slate and bark all give a shedding gecko something to rub against. Then check your lid. They climb well, they are quick after dark, and a loose corner on a screen top is an open door.

06

Feeding

Crickets and mealworms are the backbone, offered every 2–3 days. Vary it where you can with roaches, silkworms and the occasional waxworm, since a mealworm-only diet builds a fat gecko on a thin skeleton. Nothing wider than the gecko's head. Gut-load the feeders, dust with calcium at nearly every meal and a multivitamin on a rotation, and pull uneaten crickets out overnight, because they will chew on a sleeping lizard.

07

Health Red Flags

Check the toes and the tail tip after every shed. Rings of retained skin tighten as they dry and take digits off; a soak and a gentle roll with damp cotton fixes this early, and nothing fixes it late. Read the tail's width too, because a full tail is a full tank. Muscle tremors, a wobbly walk or a rubbery jaw mean calcium has run out. Any of those, plus lethargy or a run of refused meals, is a reptile-vet visit.

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.