



## Husbandry Handbook

# LONG TAILED GRASS LIZARD

(*Takydromus sexlineatus*)



### The Tale of the Tail

As the sun crests the horizon throughout Southeast Asia and the nocturnal species look for a secure place to sleep, the diurnal species start to wake up. In the grasses and bamboo fields a small lizard starts to work its way through the blades and leaves to find a place to bask and warm up. Myths of this creature describe it as a small but agile little snake with a venomous and deadly bite. In reality, the Long Tailed Grass Lizard is nothing more than a well-adapted arboreal expert of the grasslands. With a tail that can be over 300% longer than their body, they have the longest tails of any living animal on earth when compared to its body length! They use this tail to help secure and balance them as they climb through blades of grass. If attacked they can use their caudal autonomy (dropping their tail) to keep the attention of a predator while they escape. As babies, their tails are bright orange while their body is similar in color to the adults with shades of tan and brown.

### Habitat

These small lizards are native to the grass and bamboo fields of Southeast Asia. Found from India to China and down through Indonesia, they have evolved to be grassland specialists. Make sure to keep that in mind when choosing décor for their terrarium. Much of the region is tropical habitats with some areas having considerable amounts of rain. Humidity should be between 70-80% and can be reached with daily misting.

### Housing

Long Tailed Grass Lizards require sealed and escape proof housing. Adults alone or as a pair will live comfortably as adults in a Zilla® 12x12x20 Front Opening Terrarium or larger enclosure. Babies are rare to see, but need to be set up in a very small escape proof habitat. To maintain humidity in the enclosure use substrates such as Zilla® Jungle Mix, Zilla Bark Blend® and Zilla® Coconut Husk Brick. Arboreal branches and perches should be created for basking spots. Try using some of the Zilla® Vertical Décor to give them more arboreal choices for hiding and basking. Provide them with a Zilla® Terraced Dish for drinking. Zilla® Waterfalls and Spring Cave can be used to provide a continuous moving water source which can entice drinking. Spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least twice per week. Every 2-3 months, remove all substrate and clean and disinfect the terrarium and décor.

### Temperature and Lighting

It is important to create a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure. Ideal temperatures for most Long Tailed Grass Lizards range from 70-75°F on the cool side and 80-85°F on the warm side. Provide a basking area on the warm side around 90-95°F. Because they are diurnal, Long Tailed Grass Lizards also require UVB lighting to thrive and stay healthy. Using a Zilla® Heat & UVB Fixture with a Zilla® 25W or 50W Mini Halogen Bulb and a Zilla® Pro Series Tropical 25 UVB/UVA Bulb will provide the correct heat and UVB needed for your lizard.

### Feeding and Diet

Wild grass lizards are mainly insectivores and will prey on a variety of invertebrates. In captivity they eat crickets, meal worms, and dubia roaches. Feeder insects should be fed a nutritional gut-load insect food and given Zilla® Gut Load Cricket Drink. By feeding these products you will increase the nutritional value of your feeders and help pass important nutrients on to your Long Tailed Grass Lizard. When feeding, spray the insects with Zilla® Calcium Supplement and Zilla® Vitamin Supplement 1-2 times weekly for additional calcium and vitamin D3, along with other essential nutrients.

### Handling

Long Tailed Grass Lizards are usually very skittish. Approach them slowly and pick them up from below when possible. Handle your grass lizard gently and deliberately, taking care not to drop or injure the animal. Also, be sure not to grab their tail or they may drop it off. Only handle them when necessary and in a secured room.

***Always be sure to wash your hands after handling or cleaning the enclosure of any animal.***

