



Northern Blue Tongue Skink Care Sheet

Congratulations on purchasing a blue tongue skink from KO Exotics. We thank you for your purchase! We take great pride in the husbandry of our reptiles and would like to share with you some tips on keeping your skink in prime condition. Should you have any questions, feel free to email us at koxotics@gmail.com.

Taking your Northern blue tongue skink home

Prior to taking your skink home, it is best to have its habitat set up. Below are some tips on essential habitat components.

- Tank:** Your skink requires an environment in which heat can be maintained. We suggest a minimum 40 breeder tank for adults. Remember, skinks are ground dwellers and like to have plenty of ground space to move around in. As a baby, this can be a 20-gallon tank, but as they grow the space required will as well. Also, when setting up your habitat, there should be a cool side and a warm side. This helps the skink bask when wanted but have the ability to cool off when a break is needed.
- Substrate:** To maintain humidity levels, it is suggested to use cypress mulch (ex. Forest Floor). You may also want to add coconut husk (ex. EcoEarth) to the mulch as well. This helps maintain higher humidity levels.
- Heat source:** Heat sources are essential for the wellbeing of your skink. We suggest a simple 100-watt heat bulb along with an overhead heat lamp. These are often the best for a controlled heat source. You can often find the heat lamps fairly cheap at your local hardware store (clamp light). You may need a higher or lower wattage bulb depending on the temps in your home. Your goal is to have a basking surface temp of 90 to 100.
- Basking rock:** Again, this does not need to be expensive to be effective. Often you can find slate tiles at your local hardware store for approximately \$1.
- Hide:** Blue tongue skinks love to hide and often need somewhere private to sleep at night. This can be a cork hide or pretty much anything deemed safe for lizards (ex. wood that has been baked and sterilized).
- Water dish:** This should be something sturdy enough that the skink cannot knock over, but able to hold an adequate amount of water for at least 2 days (the heat lamp may evaporate the water if put too close to the heat source, so it is suggested to keep the water on the cool side of the habitat).
- Food dish:** This will not remain in the habitat but should be big enough to hold the food and be large enough for the skink to be able to comfortably access the food. If too small, the skink may have a difficult time biting their food without biting the dish.
- Thermometer/Humidity Gauge:** This is essential in maintaining proper temperature and humidity levels for your skink. It is suggested that the basking surface temp be between 90-100 degrees Fahrenheit. This should be measured with an infrared temp gun. The cool side is suggested to be between 70-80 degrees Fahrenheit. For a Northern blue tongue skink, it is suggested the humidity level remain between 50-60.
- Reptile veterinarian:** It is best to be familiar with a local reptile vet and have their phone number for future reference. It is best to have this in advance as you do not want to search for this type of information if an emergency arises.
- Food:** It is suggested that babies are fed a high-quality, grain-free wet dog food (ex. Canidae, Blue Buffalo, Nature's Logic, Instinct or Wellness). We recommend poultry flavors.
- Supplements:** Calcium and D3 should be added to every feed. This aids in proper skeletal development and upkeep. There are quite a few on the market, we personally use Repashy Calcium Plus.

What to expect after your Northern blue tongue skink comes home

It is natural for your blue tongue skink to go through a transitional period for a short time after arriving home. Here are some behaviors you may notice. This is natural as your skink transitions to their new environment.

- The number one behavior that is seen is your skink may not be willing to eat. This can happen for a week or two. Keep offering food daily, over time you will notice they will begin to eat.
- Hiding for long periods of time. Don't worry, they are ok! They are just assessing the safety of their new environment. This too can last a week to three weeks! After they learn to trust they are safe in their environment, they will begin to explore! Resist the urge to take them from their hiding spot and hold them. This will amplify their anxiety and will take them longer to trust the new environment!
- Hissing and showing of the tongue. This is their main defense in the wild. When you see this display, they are often nervous for their own safety and are attempting to protect themselves. Be patient and approach slowly but confidently! This too will dissipate over time. The more they see you and know you are not a threat, the less they will feel the need to defend themselves. But be careful, they can bite!
- If this is your first blue tongue skink, you may be concerned with their breathing. Often skinks take deep breaths which looks like they are having a difficult time breathing. This is normal. It is called huffing and they are trying to convince you they are big and dangerous. The only time to be concerned of their breathing is if there is excessive mucus around the nose area and or you hear a wheezing noise.

Ongoing care of your Northern blue tongue skink

- For the first 3 months of a baby blue tongue's life, they should be fed a portion of premium dog food the size of it's head daily. After 3 months of age, it is ok to taper off to feeding every other day. If you notice your skink is not eating as much, it is ok to taper back to every third day (which often occurs around 9-10 months of age). Once your skink is approximately one-year old, feeding can be tapered down to once a week.
- Remember to add calcium powder to every feeding.***
- You may want to utilize an automatic timer, but it is best to keep a consistent schedule turning the heat lamp (and any other daytime lighting you may want to use) on at a specific time and off at a specific time (usually 12-hour intervals). This will aid in maintaining the proper circadian cycle that is often in conjunction with daytime/nighttime.
- After giving your skink proper time to acclimate to their new environment, try to pick them up for short periods of time daily. This is not a necessity, but if you want to be able to teach your skink to be held, this will help them feel that being held is safe.
- You may want to add a UVB bulb to your setup. This is not necessary, but some choose to add for additional vitamin D benefits. As long as you are consistent with your calcium (with vitamin D3), you will not need the UVB bulb.
- Remember, be patient! Your skink needs to get used to their new environment and to you!

Find us at:

- Visit us at our website: www.KOExotics.com
- Email us at: KOExotics@gmail.com
- Follow us on social media at:  