

Keeping of Iranian eyelid gecko (*Eublepharis angramainyu* Anderson & Leviton, 1966) at BION Terrarium Center

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As a matter of fact Iranian eyelid geckos (*Eublepharis angramainyu* Anderson & Leviton, 1966) is the largest (Fig. 4) and the most attractive representative of the *Eublepharis* genus and an amazing species introduced in Herpetoculture both for hobbyists and collectors. The size of an adult male could reach 30 cm (11.81 in). It is a robust lizard with a high yellow basic color. However it should be said that animals from Ilam province (Iran) are the largest even within the species. BION Terrarium Center has been successfully keeping and breeding them for many years since 2010 and started to breed them on a regular basis in 2012. Our largest male was 32 cm (12.59 in) long, weighted 210 g and had been producing healthy offsprings for 15 years (Fig. 2).

Eu. angramainyu inhabits the western part of Zagros mountains and territories in Mesopotamia between Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Some individuals were found in South-East of Turkey (Fig. 1). Generally these geckos occupy stony hills, karstic areas with poor vegetation found mainly near the water, mountain areas with deep damp crevices or small earth caves of the gypsum depositions with seasonal vegetation in the elevations of 300 – 1000 m above sea level.



Figure 1. Natural distribution of *Eu. angramainyu* (Seufer et al., 2005).

In lowlands the species inhabits steppe regions, loamy grounds and limestones with sparse vegetation. The climate here is characterized by subtropical winter rains,

short spring and autumn with mild temperatures and long hot summer with temperature sometimes reaching +50 °C (Seufer et al., 2005).



Figure 2. The largest *Eu. angramainyu* male “Zaratustra”



Figure 3. General physical appearance of *Eu. angramainyu*.



Figure 4. Size comparison of *Eu. macularius* (left) and *Eu. angramainyu* (right).

Iranian eyelid gecko was named after an ancient Persian nocturnal ghost Angramainyu. Males are larger than females with 11-17 preanal pores. However females have these pores too, though not as pronounced. Males have bigger heads and well-seen hemipenial bulges. The eyelid fringe is covered by 41-48 scales (Seufer et al., 2005). The first sublabial shield is in contact with the large scales situated behind the mental. The ventral scales (27-38 across the belly) are smooth, hexagonal and not imbricate. Head is strong, almost heart-shaped. They have light brown iris blending into a light grey near the eyelid and pupil. Tail looks segmented and is able to regenerate if cut or bitten off. Last half of the tail is whitish with a pattern of horizontal dark bands and spots forming irregular row. Background color of the body, except last two thirds of the tail, is light to strong yellow, while ventral side of the body is whitish. The patterning consists of dark to black, irregular spots or marking elements. Adult animals have a vertebral, light stripe running from the back of the head to the tail's base which is limited on either side by an interrupted dark stripe (Fig. 3). Dorsolateral patterning is also arranged in striped running lengthways, though the patterns often blend into the ones adjoining them. Head patterns are formed by light and dark spots with some animals showing v-shaped arrangement, the tip of which then turns into the light vertebral line. Young animals display three to four dark horizontal bands on a whitish basic color.

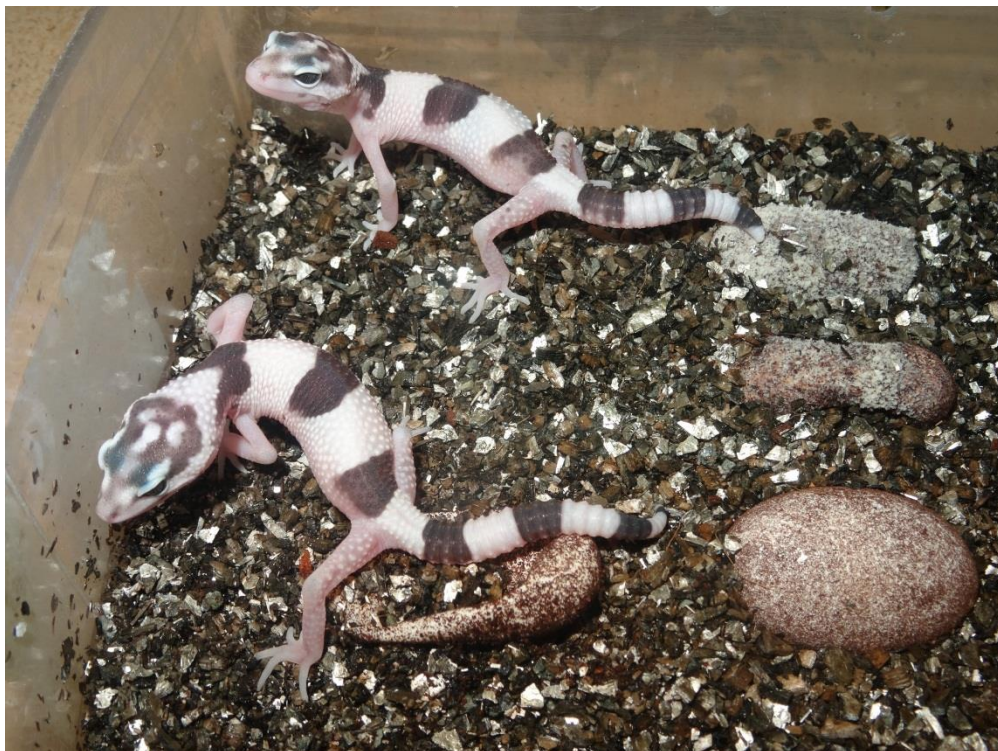


Figure 5. *Eu. angramainyu* hatchlings.

This is a non-CITES species listed in IUCN Red List as a species for which actual data on size and state of natural populations is deficient (DD). However anyway, being popular among hobbyists and quickly gaining population in trade of exotic reptiles

worldwide, this species requires creation of stable ex situ populations in herpetoculture in order to save wild populations from poaching and smuggling.

Keeping and breeding requirements

We obtained the first breeding group (originated from the Ilam province, Iran) in December 2010; the second group (originated from the Kermanshah province, Iran) was obtained in 2013.

Terrarium: For an adult pair or group (1.2) - not less than of 90*50*45 cm (35.43*19.68*17.71 in) terrarium is used. Important note: the bottom area should be at least 0.2 m². We use clay as substrate (depth 2-3 cm (0.78-1.18 in). Babies and young lizards are kept separately by 1-2 specimens in a plastic box with bottom heating. We keep separately babies from different clutches. Babies of same sex can be kept together in pairs if needed with no signs of aggression however an eye should be kept on them anyway. With the growth of animals, we move them into larger boxes. Substrate: paper or wipes. Decoration includes water bowls, bamboo tubes as hiding places a moist chamber (a box with moist moss or coconut substrate mixed with sand or solely) (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. *Eu. angramainyu* hatchlings.

Lighting. We use a full spectrum lamp for lighting and a 60-W spot lamp for additional heating. Lighting period is 12/12. UV light is not required for adults; a full spectrum lamp is used for babies as well.

Temperature. Daytime temperature is +28 - +32 °C (82.4 - 89.6 F), nighttime - +25 - +26 °C (77.0 - 78.8 F).

Humidity. 50-60%. Achieved by spraying 2 times a day.

Diet. We feed adult specimens with crickets/cockroaches 2-3 times a week 5 insects dusted with calcium per animal; Turkestan roaches – 1 time a week 5 insects per animal; 1 pinkie mouse is offer once a week (for pregnant females or after laying eggs and sometimes for males).

We feed babies with crickets – 5 times a week 5 proper-sized insects per animal dusted with calcium. The dish with Calcium powder with D3 should be constantly available in the terrarium for both adults and juveniles.



Figure 7. A gravid female with clearly seen developing eggs.

References

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3. *Eublepharis angramainyu* S. Anderson and Leviton, 1966a: 1-5, figs. 1-2 (Type locality: between Masjed Soleyman and Batvand, Khuzestan Province, Iran; Holotype: CAS 86384). -S. Anderson, 1968:332. -J. J. Schmidtler and J. F. Schmidtler, 1970:239-241, figs. 1-2. -Tuck, 1971b: 56. -S. Anderson, 1974:31, 43-Schleich, 1977:127, 129. - Darevsky, 1978:207-208, fig. 3. Welch, 1983:6. - Szczerbak and Golubev, 1986:29-30 [1996:29], fig. 7. - Grisner, 1988:441-452. -Kluge, 1991:8. -Leviton et al, 1992:36-37, col. p1. 4H. - Kluge, 1993: 10.
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