

Keeping of centralian knob-tailed gecko (*Nephrurus amya* Couper & Gregson, 1994) at BION Terrarium Center

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Nephrurus amya is named after Amy Couper, daughter of Australian herpetologist Patrick J. Couper. It is the largest species within *Nephrurus* genus. This terrestrial species is endemic to Australia and essentially arid-adapted like all other knob-tailed gecko species. This species is restricted to the center of Australia around the Alice Springs area, north to Barrow Creek in the Northern Territory (Fig. 1). Here it inhabits open or lightly wooded areas on stony soils or rocky hillsides (Porter, 2005; Cogger, 1992).



Figure 1. *Nephrurus amya* natural distribution.

Snout-to-vent length (SVL) is 127-140 mm (5-5.5 in). Adult specimens commonly weigh at over 50 g. Tail is relatively short and narrow. Rostral and mental shields are rounded. Labials are larger than adjacent scales. Digits are short, round, without enlarged apical subdigital lamellae and covered below by numerous irregular, small, spinose tubercles. All digits are clawed. Preanal pores are absent (Cogger, 1992).

Background coloration is sandy or reddish brown, and a fine, dark, reticulated network often covers the head. Some of the highly spinous tubercles are creamy colored, and these may be organized into rough transverse lines; others can be darker, producing a spotted effect (Swan, 2008).

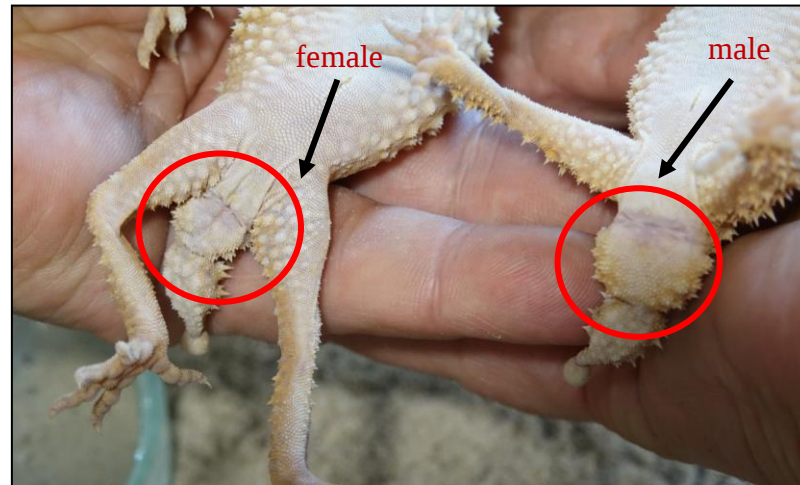


Figure 2. *Nephruvus amyaе* female and male general morphological differences.

Males are easy to sex being around 12 months of age. They are smaller than females in length and bulk. They also possess a pair of hemipenal swellings at the base of the tail (Fig. 2). Sometimes it is possible to sex these geckos due to presence of such bulges at 3 months of age (Wagner & Lasik, 1996).

Keeping and breeding requirements

Keeping. We keep adults geckos in horizontal terrariums. Required space is 50x50 cm (19.68x19.68 in) per individual. We use 2-4 cm (0.79-1.57 in) layer of coarse sand as a substrate. Decoration includes several ceramic shelters and a moist chamber (Fig. 3) with sand. Sand layer inside the moist chamber is 5-7 cm (1.97-2.75 in) deep. It should have medium humidity as a place for egg laying and as a resource of moisture.



Figure 3. *Nephruvus amyaе* inside a moist chamber.

Lighting. Simple lighting lamps are used for day lighting (12 hours). We use no basking lighting.

Temperature. Daytime temperature is +26 - +28 °C (78.8 - 82.4 F), nighttime - +20 - +23 °C (68.0 - 73.4 F). Temperature does not exceed +28 °C (82.4 F). Temperature at the hibernation time (2-4 weeks) is +18 °C (64.4 F). After slight hibernation we smoothly increase temperature to +26 - +28 °C (78.8 - 82.4 F) and the daylighting period to 14 hours.

Humidity. Humidity level is 50-60% with 2-3 spraying sessions per week.

Water. Water bowl is desirable, but not mandatory.

Diet. Diet consists of crickets and Turkestan cockroaches. For adults food is provided 2-3 times a week (4-6 insects per head). We offer "Repashy" calcium-vitamin supplements for every feeding.

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