

Flora & Fauna of Spain

Moorish & Turkish Geckos

The Moorish and Turkish geckos have many similarities. These include:

- The male is larger than the female
- As with most lizards they have the ability to detach a section or all of their tail in order to confuse predators. While the disconnected tail still wriggles as a distraction to the predator, the gecko has a chance to escape. Regeneration of a new tail occurs over the coming weeks
- They live on rocks, in trees, in log piles, ruins and also inhabited buildings
- Generally they are nocturnal creatures but can be seen basking in the sun during the day
- Their food consists mainly of insects such as moths, beetles, caterpillars and spiders.
- Breeding usually takes place around April and June. The female lays two small, white, oval soft shelled eggs into wall crevices, hollow bricks etc. The incubation can take several months depending on temperatures.

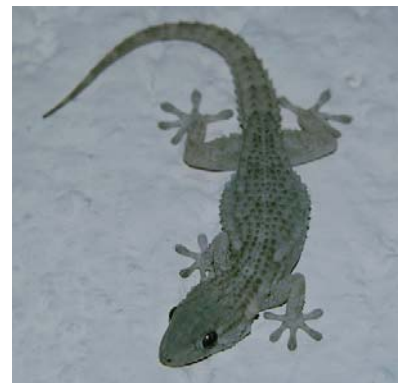
Individual characteristics:

Moorish Gecko (*Tarentola mauritanica*)

Moorish geckos are fairly widespread, found throughout Portugal, the warmer southern parts of Spain and north Africa. They are rarely found in the high mountain areas because they are influenced by temperature. They have the ability to hibernate for 2-3 months if temperatures drop.

Adults can measure up to 15 cm in total length. They have a robust body and flat head with an obtuse mouth, big eyes, no eyelids and vertical pupils. The back, legs and tail have prominent conic tubercles. However a regenerated tail is smoother and doesn't have tubercles.

Their colouration can vary but generally it is a camouflage pattern of browns, greens and greys. These colours change in intensity according to the light.



Turkish Gecko - *Hemidactylus turcicus*

This gecko is less widespread than the more common Moorish Gecko. It is usually found only in southern Portugal and the warmer Mediterranean coastal zones.

It is a more slender lizard with a finer head and with far fewer tubercles. It is also not known to grow as long as the Moorish Gecko, reaching 12cm in total length.

The tail usually has black and pink stripes and the body is a mottled sandy pink with somewhat translucent tones.

This gecko has claws on each toe whereas the Moorish gecko has developed claws on only the third and fourth digits.

