Care Sheet:
Small diurnal skinks

Moko skink (*Oligosoma moco*)

Adult Size: Up to 81mm SVL.

Threat status: 'At Risk – Relict'.

Lifespan: Unknown.

Habitat: Grassland, Scrub, Coastal Vegetation.

Authorisation level: Insurance population species

Shore skink (*Oligosoma smithi*)

Adult Size: Up to 82mm SVL.

Threat status: 'At Risk – Naturally Uncommon'.

Lifespan: Unknown.

Habitat: Boulder beaches, Sand dunes.

Authorisation Level: Insurance population species

Grass skink (*Oligosoma polychroma* clades 1-7)

Adult Size: Up to 80mm SVL.

Threat status: 'Not Threatened'.

Lifespan: Unknown.

Habitat: Grassland, Boulder beaches, Sand Dunes.

Authorisation Level: Insurance population species

Small-scaled skink (*Oligosoma microlepis*)

Adult Size: Up to 73mm SVL.

Threat status: 'Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable'.

Lifespan: Unknown.

Habitat: Scree slopes, Grassland.

Authorisation Level: Insurance population species

***Enclosure*:**

Minimum enclosure size = 100x50x50cm (LxWxH).

***Ideal Group Size*:**

2:2-4 (M:F).

***Compatible Species*:**

Green geckos, Forest geckos, Pacific geckos, 'Common geckos' Goldstripe geckos.

***Recommended Cage Furnishing*:**

The enclosure should be decorated with live plants, logs, branches, other hiding places, and a thick layer of leaf litter as a substrate on the floor. Provide plenty of ground cover in the form of bark stacks, Onduline, plat pieces of wood, polythene pipe bamboo etc. For species that occur in rock piles or pebble banks /

beaches, a set-up including a pile of river-worn pebbles in the base can be used, however it may be difficult to locate / capture animals in this set-up. A longer, rather than taller, enclosure is preferable, however these skinks will freely climb the plants and up the wall of the mesh and utilise the entire space. It's advisable to provide a good structure of climbing branches within the set-up. Divaricating plants, such as *Coprosma rhamnoides* and pohuehue (*Muehlenbeckia complexa*) provide an excellent 3D structure for the skinks to climb on. A large water bowl, with submerged rocks, will provide the skinks with water to drink and submerge themselves in, on hot summer days. These species occur in relatively dry habitats however it is advisable to provide at least one damp hide (depending on number of specimens housed) to assist with sloughing.

***Breeding*:**

Mating occurs in spring, and 2 – 6 young are born between January – March the following year. It is advisable to remove the gravid females to separate holding cages just before they are due to give birth. This will make it easier to locate and count the number of juveniles born, and then the female may be returned to her original enclosure (moko skinks are known to cannibalise their offspring). Feeding the babies can be a challenge as you need to provide very small prey items. Vinegar or fruit flies (Drosophila) make excellent food, as does sweep-netting small insects in long grass. By regularly adding a thin layer of fresh leaf litter to the cage, you will introduce plenty of tiny invertebrates living amongst the litter. Be careful not to introduce large predatory spiders and centipedes though.

***Feeding*:**

These skinks are primarily insectivorous (insect eating) and are most commonly fed live insects such as flies, moths, small cockroaches, spiders, and small crickets and grasshoppers. These insects can be wild caught or captive-bred. Reptile nutrient supplements may need to be added to captive-bred insects. Sand hoppers (amphipod crustaceans) make excellent food for Moko, Shore and Grass skinks, and can be caught under seaweed at the beach or under leaf litter in the forest. These skinks will also eat fruit (banana, pear, and custard apple) and sweet purees (Watties baby pears). It is not uncommon to see them tearing off chunks of banana and gulping it down whole. Diluted honey can also be provided occasionally. They can be ferocious predators and will compete for food, so make sure you feed out plenty of food to prevent fighting.

***Notes*:**

- Some keepers have experienced issues with aggression when housing small-scaled skinks in captivity.
- These skinks are all fast-moving species, which poses a challenge for their captive management. It is advisable to include a lip under the door when designing enclosures for these species to minimise the risk of escapees.