

Blue-Tongued Skink Sexing

Bonus content from the May 2009 REPTILES magazine article "Lovin' the Blues."

By Zach Griffith

Sexing blue-tongued skinks (*Tiliqua* spp.) can be terribly frustrating, but it is really not that difficult if you know what to look for. Most of us have heard the basic tips and tricks: Males often have a larger and more triangular head, a thicker tail base, slimmer sides and a huskier throat than females. You may also have heard that males tend to have orange and more brightly colored eyes, whereas females are browner.

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Blue-tongued skinks can be territorial. They should only be put together for supervised copulations. In reality, these methods are not accurate ways to sex blue-tongues. For example, if you look at your skink and observe that it has a bulky head with a fat tail, you might deduce that your animal is male when, in fact, you could just have a large female with a healthy fat storage in her tail. Although you may have guessed correctly, you have not discovered anything beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Here are three surefire methods. I have devised a little composition I call "The Three E's."

1. Ejection or dispersion of seminal plugs reveals a male blue-tongued skink.
2. Eversion of hemipenes during excretion reveals a male blue-tongued skink.
3. Expression or behavior. How does your animal react when placed with another blue-tongue? If you put two animals together and one begins to chase and mount the other, you have definitively discovered that the aggressor is a male.

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