



Western New York Herpetological Society

www.wnyherp.org

Common Name: Emerald Swift

Latin Name: *Sceloporus Malachiticus*

Native to: The Emerald Swift can be found in the forested regions of Central America from Mexico to Panama.

Size: Emerald Swifts can reach six to eight inches in length.

Life span: Generally three to five years or longer if properly cared for.

General appearance: These lizards are an emerald green in appearance with a stocky body. Males will often have a bluish hue to the scales and will often have a bright blue underside. Females are slightly smaller and tend to have a bit more gray in their coloration, often with brown spots. Female emerald swifts rarely have the bluish underside that the males possess.

Housing requirements:

Enclosure: A 30-gallon or larger aquarium with a secure screen top or other similarly sized enclosure is required to comfortably keep emerald swifts.

Temperature: As with most reptiles, a thermal gradient should be provided for the emerald swift. Daytime temperatures should be 75° F with a basking area of 95° F. Nighttime temperatures for the emerald swift can be maintained at 70° F.

Heat/Light: The emerald swift requires UVA and UVB light. This can be provided by using full spectrum fluorescent tubes, fluorescent power compact bulbs, or mercury vapor bulbs. Mercury vapor bulbs also provide heat. Additional heat can be provided by using ceramic emitters, incandescent basking bulbs, or under-the-tank heaters. Timers are recommended to provide an adequate photoperiod. Be sure to regularly check the temperatures of the enclosure and basking spot with a thermometer. Hot rocks should never be used with any reptile or amphibian as they may cause serious burns to your animal.

Substrate: Emerald swifts like to burrow so substrates such as coconut fiber and reptile bark make excellent choices. Younger emerald swifts can be housed on indoor/outdoor carpeting or newspaper in impaction from the substrate is a concern.

Environment: Emerald swifts need 60% humidity and usually require a daily misting. Also provide plenty of branches and artificial plants to allow the swifts to climb. A hide box should also be provided as well.

Diet: Emerald swifts are primarily insectivorous. Adults should be fed three to four times per week. Juveniles should be offered food daily. A variety of insects can be offered, including crickets, meal worms, wax worms, king worms, and butter worms. Insects should be gut-loaded and if required, dusted with vitamin supplements twice a week.

Maintenance: The enclosure should be spot cleaned daily. A thorough cleaning should be performed on a regular basis. A 5% bleach solution is an excellent disinfectant. Be sure to thoroughly rinse the enclosure before replacing the substrate and placing the emerald swift back in the enclosure. Hand washing after handling the lizard or any cage furnishings is essential.

Other references or recommended reading:

Hunziker, Ray. *Swifts & Spiny Lizards*. TFH Publications. 1998

De Vosjoli, Phillippe. *The Lizard Keeper's Handbook*. Advanced Vivarium Systems 1994

Herp Haven Reptile Rescue. *Emerald Swift*. Available On-Line:

<http://herphavenreptilerescue.org/EmeraldSwift.html>

Reptic Zone. *Swifts*. Available On-Line: <http://www.repticzone.com/caresheets/Swifts.html>