



**BLUE SPINY
LIZARD**
SQUAMATA
Family: Phrynosomatidae
Genus: *Sceloporus*
Species: *serrifer
cyanogenys*



Range: southern Texas, through the northeast Mexico

Habitat: rocky terrains in arid and semi-arid environments

Niche: insectivorous, terrestrial, diurnal

Wild diet: insects, prefer flying insects

Zoo diet:

Life Span: 3 - 4 years

Sexual dimorphism: dichromatic - Males have a blue-green sheen to the back and a blue chin, throat and belly

Location in SF Zoo: South American Tropical Rainforest and Aviary

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

The Blue Spiny Lizard is the largest of the spiny lizards, so called due to their large, strongly keeled scales; the spines may deter some predators. The tails are longer than the body and may break off as an escape mechanism.

This is a stocky, grayish-brown lizard with white spots on the head and back and the distinguishing white-bordered black collar around the neck; coloring provides good protection in the rocky crevices. Males have a blue-green sheen to the back and a blue chin, throat and belly, which they display for mating purposes. The scales of the back feel very rough, for each scale bears a keel ending in a sharp spine. Females and young lack blue-green coloration and belly patches.

Weight:

Length: 5 – 14 in (incl tail)

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List. The blue spiny lizard is not a protected species in Texas and can be legally collected with a hunting license.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Spiny Blue Lizards are good climbers of rocks and trees, but also found on the ground. When they're not foraging, the lizards spend a lot of time sheltering underground or in rocky crevices, avoiding temperature extremes or hiding from predators.

In disputes the *Sceloporus* male bobs his head very frequently, moving it up and down with incredible speed. A weaker male will flee. If the rival doesn't withdraw, he will turn broadside and flatten his body so as to present the greatest area and display the glowing blue of the belly.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

This species of *Sceloporus* is ovoviviporous (live-bearing). Births occur from February to June to as many as 18 young per litter.

Incubation: # of young: 6 – 18 live young	Sexual Maturity: Weight at birth: Length at birth:
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MISCELLANEOUS

The genus *Sceloporus* species are known as the "blue bellies" and are closely related to the iguanas.

There are four recognized subspecies of *S. serrifer*. The subspecies are known to intergrade in areas where their geographic ranges overlap, so differentiating them can be difficult.

- *S. s. cyanogenys* is found in southern Texas
- *S. s. plioporus*
- *S. s. prezygus*
- *S. s. serrifer*

Sources:

Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia © 1984 Grzimek, Bernhard, Van Nostrand Reinhold Co
<http://www.herpssoftexas.org/content/blue-spiny-lizard>
http://www.oaklandzoo.org/Blue_Spiny_Lizard.php

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