

Intestinal Parasites of Pet Leopard geckos

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To maintain preventive welfare for a widespread exotic pet animal and contentment to serious reptile keepers, parasitological testing of 250 feces samples of 332 Leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*, Blyth 1854) of 32 pet stocks located in Vienna, Lower Austria, Thuringia, and Bavaria was performed between 2006 and 2009. Test procedures applied to the feces samples were (1) a microscopical examination of an aqueous suspension, (2) a modified Ziehl-Neelsen staining, and (3) polymerase-chain-reactions for the detection of *Cryptosporidium*-, *Entamoeba*- and *Blastocystis*-DNA, respectively.

Leopard geckos are insectivore nocturnal ground-dwellers naturally found in the deserts of Southern Central Asia; but all the geckos investigated were bred in captivity in Europe, and all animals were kept indoor exclusively, a substantial fraction of them was overaged, and pet Leopard geckos are traded and shipped frequently throughout Central Europe. Thus, only a few intestinal parasites, most of them are facultative pathogens and opportunists, meet these epidemiological preconditions by their mode of living. Examples of such parasites and the significance of their endurance in pet stocks for a cost-effective animal breeding, and illustrations of the compliance of the animal keepers and of the rating of such preventive surveys within an efficient conservation medicine will be presented.