



CARE GUIDE



CAPE YORK HEAD SQUEAKER

Invertebrate keeping guideline

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CAPE YORK HEAD SQUEAKER

Goodangarkia praesinus



PROFILE

Cape York Head Squeakers are found in far north Queensland in suitable habitats from Cairns to Cape York Peninsula. They are robust katydids and grow to around 40mm long. Both sexes are similar in size and have short wings barely covering the abdomen. Adult females have a long sabre-like ovipositor (structure for depositing eggs) making the sexes very easy to differentiate.

The name 'head squeaker' comes from their ability to create a squeaking noise from their head when disturbed. Both sexes can make this noise, but how they create it is not well understood.

These katydids are omnivorous and are equipped with large powerful mandibles that enable them to feed on a variety of food types. They feed on an assortment of plant material including seeds, particularly those of tall grasses which seems to be their preferred habitat. They are opportunistic predators and will readily prey upon smaller insects that they are able to overpower. They also feed upon the eggs of other invertebrates including those of spiders (image above).

In order to reproduce, male Cape York Head Squeakers will transfer a spermatophore to the females. A spermatophore is a white-coloured mass that can sometimes be seen at the tip of the female's abdomen after mating has occurred. It contains sperm to fertilise the eggs. Females lay elongated rice-like eggs in the ground using their ovipositor. The young will hatch out looking like miniature versions of their parents, and will shed their exoskeletons to grow. This species is a long-lived katydid, with a life-span of well over 12 months. Adults can live at least 8 months in captivity.

FOOD

Minibeast Wildlife's Katydid Food and Predatory Katydid Food (available from Minibeast Wildlife's Bug shop). This can be offered in a small dish, such as a bottle cap. They also feed on grass seed and dead insects. They will nibble on a variety of domestic garden plants including Spider Lily *Hymenocallis* spp. (These plants also make good captive habitat for these katydids)

WATER

Mist spray the enclosure once a day. This will keep the enclosure damp and the humidity high. The katydids will drink from the moisture on the foliage and branches if they require it.

ENCLOSURE

An enclosure at least 30cm high with a similar length and width is required to adequately house one or two adults. The base of the enclosure may be covered in a substrate of coco-peat (available from Minibeast Wildlife) to a depth of around 5cm. While substrate of this type is not essential, it will accommodate breeding. Sticks and branches should be placed within the enclosure as they are required for the insects to hang from whilst moulting.

SUBSTRATE

Not required, but it can help with clean up to put some paper down on the bottom of the enclosure to catch the frass (poo) and leaf material that falls to the ground. Coco-peat is also a suitable substrate.

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

Remove frass (poo), any spilled Katydid food and fallen leaf material from the bottom of the enclosure once a week.

HANDLING

Not recommended. They are a little nervous and unpredictable and may leap away without warning. They also have powerful mandibles, and although not aggressive large specimens could inflict a painful bite if handled roughly.

TEMPERATURE

The safe range is 22 – 28° C, but will tolerate periods of cooler temperatures (overnight lows) of 12°C as long as the temperatures rises back into the safe range during the day. Cooler temperatures will result in a slower growth rate.

COMMON ISSUES

If keeping these katydids in groups of high numbers, you may find that some individuals are injured or disrupted during the delicate moulting process. If this happens, your katydids will need more space, so divide your group into multiple enclosures.



12-18 months life span



These animals are captive bred, and should not be released into the wild



50-60%



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