

Green Crested Basilisk (*Basiliscus plumifrons*)

Habitat and Distribution: Found in rainforests from Mexico south to Ecuador.

Size: Up to 2 feet long

Wild Diet: Plants, including flowers, fruits and vegetables, as well as insects and small vertebrates.

Predators: Raptors and snakes

Life Span: 15-20 years

Reproduction: Females will lay up to 20 eggs in a hole that she digs in the ground. When she is done she will cover the eggs with dirt. After 45-90 days, the eggs will hatch. The babies are about three inches long and have the ability to run, climb, and swim within the first 24 hours of life.

Behavior: Basilisks are usually found in the understory of the rainforest. They are arboreal, and prefer trees and shrubs near water. When surprised or frightened they will drop from the branches and scurry to the nearest water source to swim away. All basilisks have specialized scales on the bottoms of their feet that allow them to run across water for quite a ways until they must dive in. Once in the water they are great swimmers. They can run on top of the water at speeds over 7 mph.

Conservation Connection: Secure, however their rainforest homes are threatened.

Interesting Facts: Green Basilisk males, when mature, have a tall crest of skin on their head which starts at the top of the head and extends down the mid-line of their back and stops half way down the tail. The females are smaller and do not have a crest.

