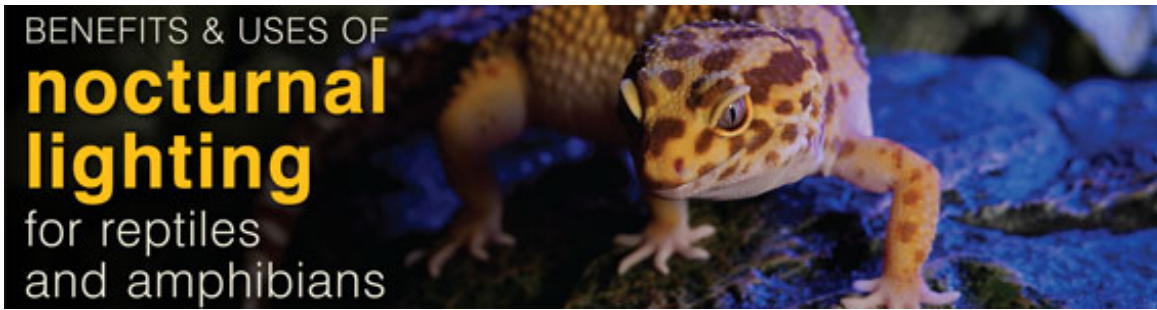


Nocturnal Lighting for Reptiles & Amphibians

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



The purpose of nocturnal lighting is to simulate natural nighttime conditions in your reptile or amphibian's habitat as closely as possible. Nocturnal lights allow you to view your reptiles at night while also maintaining temperatures in the habitat, and they can be very useful and beneficial for all herps.

What is Nocturnal Lighting?

Using [nocturnal lighting](#) doesn't mean simply leaving the lights on at night. It refers to the use of a specific kind of bulb that produces heat while giving off very little light. Nocturnal bulbs allow you to observe your reptiles at night without disturbing their natural cycles and behaviors, and they help to prevent unsafe decreases in habitat temperatures overnight.

Lights that can be used as nocturnal bulbs include [infrared heat lamps](#), black lights, and [nocturnal incandescent lights](#), as long as they are red, black, or nighttime blue. White lights or other bright lights should never be used as a light or heat source for any reptile at night, as they will disrupt natural cycles and can cause significant health problems.

Nocturnal Species

Nocturnal lighting is not necessary for nocturnal reptile species, but it is recommended. It will help to more accurately recreate their natural nighttime conditions in the wild, which helps to prevent stress and stress-related illnesses. Additionally, the only time you are really able to observe significant activity of nocturnal reptiles is at night, and nocturnal lighting allows you to view your reptile without disturbing its natural behaviors. It is also an excellent heat source that you can use both at night and during the day in place of, or as well as, daytime basking lamps.

Diurnal and Crepuscular Species

Nocturnal lighting isn't just for nocturnal reptiles; it can be used for diurnal and crepuscular reptiles as well. Though these types of reptiles are most active during other periods of the day, that doesn't mean they are totally inactive at night, and nocturnal lights can still be useful for nighttime observation. Nocturnal lighting can

also help to keep their habitat at the appropriate temperature overnight, especially for those species that need high temperatures all the time, and it will more clearly define the day-night periods for them.

How to Use Nocturnal Lighting

Regardless of when their active period is, reptiles need a cycle of approximately 12 hours of light followed by 12 hours of darkness. This will vary slightly depending on the season. Nocturnal lighting can be left on all the time if you are using it as a 24 hour heat source, or it can be turned on as soon as you turn off your daytime lights. If you are out of the house at the time when their lighting needs to be switched on or off, we recommend the use of timers that simulate natural dusk and dawn periods to gradually switch your reptile over from daytime to nighttime lights.

Be sure to place all nocturnal bulbs out of your reptile's reach. Because they are heat producing bulbs, they are hot enough that your reptile could easily burn itself if it had access to the fixtures.