herpy

AGAMAS

Painted Dragon

Ctenophorus pictus

Ctenophorus pictus is a small, diurnal agamid from Australia's arid interior, where the male glows in red, yellow and blue in spring. It grows to 18-25 cm, burrows into sand and feeds on insects. The species is a busy, fast enclosure lizard that requires a long, sandy enclosure, strong heat and UVB, but not much height. The species is very short-lived, and there is little care knowledge for this particular species.

Family: Agamidae Former name: *Amphibolurus pictus; Ctenophorus dudleyi* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**18-25 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**8-16 g**
Lifespan	**1-2 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert and semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**100 × 40 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 3 adults
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**35-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-25 °C**
Humidity	**20-40%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects and plants**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**2-4 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-4**
Incubation	**55-80 days** at 28-32 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix III**
EU annex	**Annex C**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	A pair or a small group of up to three adults needs an enclosure of at least 100 × 40 × 40 cm (length × width × height). The measurement is borrowed from *Ctenophorus nuchalis*, which has the same way of life.
TEMPERATURE	The species is a desert lizard and needs a large temperature difference.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The humidity must be low, about 20-40 %; the figure is an estimate based on the habitat. The enclosure must be well ventilated and kept dry, and the sand must not become damp, with the exception of the laying corner.
LIGHTING AND UVB	Diurnal desert species need strong light and UVB. The Ferguson zone has not been established for the species; *C. nuchalis* belongs to zone 3-4, and zone 3 is a good starting point.
FEEDING	The species eats mostly insects, often ants and other small arthropods in the wild, and some animals also take plant matter. In the enclosure crickets and roaches are the staple food, with mealworms and silkworms for variety.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The animal is fast, nervous and withdraws quickly if startled. Handling is not necessary and stresses the animal. The male marks his territory with head-bobbing and arm-waving.
NATIVE RANGE	Australia.