herpy

AGAMAS

Sailfin Lizard

Hydrosaurus amboinensis

Hydrosaurus amboinensis is a large, semi-aquatic agamid from the Moluccas and New Guinea. The male has a crest on the nape and a tall sail on the tail. It reaches 60-120 cm, basks on branches over the water and plunges into it when in danger. It needs a very large, warm and humid enclosure with a deep water section and powerful UVB.

Family: Agamidae Former name: *Lacerta amboinensis; Lophura amboinensis* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**60-120 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-25 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Rainforest and wetland**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**200 × 80 × 150 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-32 °C**
Basking spot	**35-45 °C**
Temperature, night	**24-27 °C**
Humidity	**75-90%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 30-50 cm
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, fruit, plants and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**2-8 eggs**
Incubation	**60-75 days** at 28-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult needs an enclosure of at least 150 × 75 × 150 cm (length × width × height), and 200 × 80 × 150 cm is better.
TEMPERATURE	*Hydrosaurus amboinensis* is a tropical species and needs a clear gradient.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The humidity should be at least 75 %, preferably 75-90 %. High humidity is essential for clean sheds, including on the crest, sail, spines and toes.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	*Hydrosaurus amboinensis* uses the water for swimming, fleeing, cooling off and drinking.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Hydrosaurus amboinensis* is active by day and basks, so it needs strong light and UVB. Use a powerful UVB tube (T5 HO, 10-12 %) in a reflective fitting covering a large part of the basking area.
FEEDING	*Hydrosaurus amboinensis* is omnivorous. In the wild it eats shoots, leaves, flowers, fruit, insects, crustaceans and small vertebrates. In the enclosure, the diet consists of plants and a moderate amount of animal food.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Hydrosaurus amboinensis* is nervous and jumpy. When in danger, it runs, often on its hind legs, down into the water and stays on the bottom until the danger has passed.
NATIVE RANGE	Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.