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AGAMAS

Philippine Sailfin Lizard

Hydrosaurus pustulatus

Hydrosaurus pustulatus is a large, semi-aquatic agamid from the streams and coastal forests of the Philippines. The male bears 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: *Istiturus pustulatus; Histiurus pustulosus* 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 pustulatus* 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 pustulatus* uses the water for swimming, fleeing, cooling off and drinking.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Hydrosaurus pustulatus* 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 pustulatus* 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 pustulatus* 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	Philippines.