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AGAMAS

Moroccan Spiny-tailed Lizard

Uromastyx nigriventris

Uromastyx nigriventris is a robust and colourful spiny-tailed lizard from the stony deserts east and south of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and in western Algeria. Adults usually have a black ground colour with yellow, green and orange markings. It reaches up to 42 cm, feeds almost exclusively on plants and digs deep burrows. It needs a large, hot, dry enclosure with a deep substrate and strong UVB, and it is kept alone.

Family: Agamidae Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**30-42 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-25 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Rock-dwelling, terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert, semi-desert and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**27-32 °C**
Basking spot	**50-55 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**20-30%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Winter rest	**16-22 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Plants**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**48 months**
Clutch size	**10-15 eggs**
Incubation	**56-84 days** at 33-34 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult needs an enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 60 cm (length × width × height), and bigger is better.
TEMPERATURE	The basking spot should have a surface temperature of 50-55 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer directly under the lamp. The cool side sits at 27-32 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be low, 20-30%, measured at substrate level on the cool side. Persistently high humidity makes the animal ill, so do not mist the enclosure.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and needs strong light. Use an LED lamp or a fluorescent tube of about 6500 K as daylight, separate from the heat.
FEEDING	*Uromastyx nigriventris* is herbivorous. About 90% of the diet should be leafy greens and flowers, about 5% hard vegetables and about 5% dry food.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	Adults are territorial, and in the wild only one adult occupies each rock pile. Keep the animal alone. Juveniles from the same clutch become aggressive towards each other and must be separated before they approach sexual maturity.
NATIVE RANGE	Morocco and Algeria.