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AGAMAS

Maned Forest Lizard

Bronchocela jubata

Bronchocela jubata is a slender, green arboreal agamid from the forests of the Sunda Islands with a heavy, hair-like nuchal crest and a tail that makes up about four fifths of its length. It grows to 55-57 cm, is diurnal and lies in wait for insects in bushes and low foliage. It can change from green to brown or black when threatened, and it is shy and not an animal for handling.

Family: Agamidae Former name: *Calotes jubatus; Bronchocela petersidoriai*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**55-57 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 150 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**32-38 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-25 °C**
Humidity	**70-90%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**2 eggs**
Incubation	**47-80 days** at 27-31 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

About the species

Bronchocela jubata is a slender, light to dark green agamid with a laterally compressed body, long legs and a very long, round tail that makes up about four fifths of the total length. The head is square, and under the chin sits a soft throat pouch with large, keeled scales. The whole animal measures 55-57 cm. Of this, no more than 14 cm is body from snout to vent, the rest is tail.

The species is told from the closely related *Bronchocela cristatella* by the nuchal crest. In *B. jubata* it consists of elongated, compressed scales that resemble hair and are slightly floppy like skin, while the crest in *B. cristatella* resembles the points of a crown. The back is green with yellow or red spots or bands, which often merge into a band over the shoulder. Under the throat there is a rust-coloured patch, the underside is yellowish to white, and the tail is green at the base with bluish spots and towards the tip dull brown with whitish spots. When the animal feels threatened, the colour changes to brown or black.

The species was described by Duméril and Bibron in 1837. It has long been confused with *B. cristatella*, and a revision from 2022 defines *B. jubata* as a species on the large Sunda Islands. Animals from Sulawesi that were previously counted here belong to *Bronchocela celebensis*. The confusion can also affect animals in the trade, so the species name of a purchased animal

should be treated with caution.

The species is shy and is not suited to handling. Lifespan is not documented, and the figure in the table is an estimate based on closely related agamids.

Distribution and habitat

Bronchocela jubata is distributed on the large Sunda Islands: Sumatra, Java, Bali and Borneo, where there are records in Kalimantan, and on some smaller islands such as Singkep and Nias. The vast majority of records are from Indonesia.

The species is also mentioned from Sulawesi, the Philippines (Mindanao), the Talaud Islands, southern Thailand, Cambodia and India. The animals from Sulawesi belong to another species, the species does not occur in India, and the other occurrences are uncertain or poorly known. The map shows only the large Sunda Islands, where the species is reliably recorded.

> **Native range:** Indonesia and Malaysia.

HABITAT

The species is found mostly in low bushes and dense foliage in forest and in open scrub. It is diurnal and arboreal. It sits still at the top of a bush waiting for prey or sways slowly back and forth like a branch in the wind. While hunting it may drop down from the branches, but it quickly runs back to the nearest bush or tree. It also uses power lines as bridges.

The climate is tropical lowland climate without a cold season: warm and humid all year round. The green colour makes the animal almost invisible in the foliage. In danger it presses itself against the branch or flees into the nearest bush. The eggs are laid in loose soil, sand or humus.

Care

THE ENCLOSURE

Little documented knowledge exists on the care of *Bronchocela jubata*. The care is based on the climate and habitat in the wild and on the closely related *Bronchocela cristatella*, which has the same requirements.

An adult needs a tall enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 150 cm (length × width × height). The long tail and the fast runs and jumps require space, and height is more important than floor area.

Furnish it with many thin branches, bamboo canes and vines at various angles and with dense planting of live plants, so that the animal can sit hidden in the foliage. A moisture-retaining mix of soil, sand and a layer of leaf litter suits as substrate, and can also be used for egg-laying. The enclosure must have good ventilation at the top, so that stagnant, humid air does not develop. The lid must close tightly.

Keep one animal in the enclosure. Remove droppings daily.

TEMPERATURE

The temperatures are borrowed from the climate in the range and from *Bronchocela cristatella*. The daytime temperature in the enclosure should be 25-30 °C, and at a basking spot high up on a branch it should be 32-38 °C. At night it should be 22-25 °C, and the temperature must not fall below 20 °C.

Use a heat lamp shielded with a guard, so that the animal does not burn itself, and measure the temperature with thermometers at both ends. The animal must always be able to retreat to the cool, shaded part. At night the heat is switched off.

Read more: Heat and temperature

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Relative humidity should be 70-90 %, as in a tropical lowland forest. Mist the enclosure thoroughly twice a day, so that leaves and branches are wet. The animal drinks droplets from the plants, and a bowl is not necessary. Let the air dry out a little between mistings, and ensure ventilation, so that mould and respiratory problems do not develop.

Read more: Humidity, misting and ventilation

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and lives in bright bushes and forest edges, so it needs strong light and UVB. Use a 6 % T5 HO tube over the basking spot, corresponding to Ferguson zone 2 with a UV index of 2-3 at the basking spot and lower in the plants. The zone has not been measured for the species, but suits a species that alternates between sun and shade. Check the distance between tube and animal with a UV meter, and replace the tubes according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Switch the light on 12 hours a day all year round. Live plants also need light, so a plant lamp can be used in addition.

Read more: Lighting and UVB

FEEDING

Bronchocela jubata feeds on insects such as butterflies, moths, dragonflies, flies and other small insects. It catches them from a still lookout in a bush. Offer varied live feeders no larger than the distance between the animal's eyes: small crickets, grasshoppers, roaches, flies and caterpillars, with fruit flies for juveniles. Fatty insects such as mealworms are given only rarely.

How often the species should be fed is not documented. Juveniles are fed daily, adults every second or third day. Dust the feeder insects with calcium at most feedings and with a vitamin and mineral supplement once a week, and give the insects a nutritious diet the day before. The animal responds to movement, so release the feeders among the branches or offer flying insects.

Read more: Feeder animals: keeping and breeding Read more: Calcium, vitamins and supplements

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is shy and is easily stressed. When it feels threatened, it turns brown or black and flees into the foliage. It is not suited to handling and is an animal to look at. Work calmly in the enclosure, and give a new animal time and plenty of hiding places among the plants.

Social behaviour in captivity is not documented. Keep one animal per enclosure; a pair can only be considered in a very large, densely planted enclosure where the animals can get away from each other.

Breeding

SEXUAL MATURITY AND SEXING

The male has a heavy nuchal crest and a throat pouch, while the female has a weaker crest. The sex is easiest to see in adult animals. Age at sexual maturity is not documented.

MATING

Breeding season and any seasonal changes are not documented for the species. The climate is humid all year round, so a rest period is probably not necessary. Put the female with the male in a large, densely planted enclosure, and watch them, so that the female can get away if the male becomes too rough.

EGG-LAYING AND CLUTCHES

The female digs a small pit in loose soil, sand or humus with her snout and lays two white, leathery, elongated eggs side by side, covered with a thin layer of soil or humus. The eggs are about 4 cm long. The number of clutches per year is not documented.

Provide the female with a laying box or a corner with at least 15 cm of lightly moist soil and sand under a layer of leaf litter. Without a suitable site the female may retain the eggs, and this requires a vet. Give her plenty of food and calcium before and after laying.

INCUBATION

The incubation period is not documented for the species. The figures in the table are borrowed from *Calotes versicolor*, whose eggs hatch after 47-80 days at 27-31 °C. Carefully dig up the eggs without turning them, and place them in a closed container with lightly moist vermiculite and small air holes. Eggs that collapse or go mouldy are dead and can be removed.

Read more: Incubating eggs

REARING THE YOUNG

Rearing is not documented for the species. Keep the hatchlings in a small but tall enclosure set up like that of the adults: dense plants, thin branches, high humidity, a basking spot and UVB. Feed them daily with fruit flies, small crickets and other small insects dusted with calcium. Keep them sorted by size, and provide many hiding places.

Health and common mistakes

Most problems are caused by mistakes in the set-up. Typical problems are:

- Stress and refusal to feed, especially in wild-caught animals. Persistent brown colour is a sign of stress.
- Bone loss (metabolic bone disease) from too little UVB and calcium.
- Dehydration from air that is too dry or too little misting.
- Respiratory infections from stagnant, cold and humid air.
- Parasites in wild-caught animals, which should be quarantined for at least three months.
- Injuries to the snout when the animal flees into the glass.

A healthy animal has clear eyes, a clear green colour and a plump body. Wash your hands after contact with the animal and enclosure, as reptiles can carry salmonella. Consult a vet experienced with reptiles if the animal loses weight, does not eat or seems lethargic.

Read more: Quarantine and hygiene Read more: Common diseases and signs of illness Read more: Buying animals: captive-bred, wild-caught and transport

Always ask someone who knows

This guide is a good place to start, but it cannot replace experience. Animals differ, and much of what matters most is learned from people who have kept the species for years. Talk to a breeder, an experienced keeper or a vet who knows reptiles and amphibians before you get the animal - and again if anything looks wrong.