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AGAMAS

Eastern Garden Lizard

Calotes versicolor

Calotes versicolor is a slender, fast arboreal agamid from South Asia that can change colour from brownish to yellow, red and almost black, and in the breeding season the male acquires a bright red head. It reaches 30-40 cm, is diurnal and feeds mostly on insects. It requires a tall enclosure with branches, strong heat and UVB, and there must be only one male in each enclosure.

Family: Agamidae Former name: *Agama versicolor; Agama indica; Calotes cristatus; Calotes gigas; Agama tiedemanni*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**30-40 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Savanna and dry forest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 120 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-29 °C**
Basking spot	**35-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-24 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
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**
Sexually mature	**7-12 months**
Clutch size	**7-33 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**47-80 days** at 27-31 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult *C. versicolor* needs an enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 120 cm (length × width × height). It is an arboreal species, so height is just as important as floor area.

TEMPERATURE

The species needs a distinct gradient. The daytime temperature in the enclosure should be 24-29 °C, and at the basking spot there should be 35-40 °C. At night there should be 21-24 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Relative humidity should be 60-80 %. This is achieved by misting the enclosure lightly once or twice a day and letting the substrate and plants dry partially between mistings.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and basks, so it needs strong light and UVB.

FEEDING

C. versicolor is first and foremost an insectivore. In the wild it eats ants, beetles, dragonflies, grasshoppers and other insects, and it also takes small vertebrates such as other lizards, geckos and young rodents.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is nervous when new, but gets used to calm surroundings. It is fast and can slip out when the lid is opened. Give a new animal a couple of weeks in peace.

NATIVE RANGE

India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and China.