herpy

AGAMAS

Mallee Dragon

Ctenophorus fordi

Ctenophorus fordi is a small, diurnal agamid from the arid, sandy scrub of Australia, where it feeds mainly on ants. It grows to 13-18 cm, and the tail makes up a good two-thirds of that. The upper side is sandy to reddish orange-brown with a pale stripe along each side. Very little is known about the husbandry of this species, so the requirements are based on the climate and on the related *Ctenophorus nuchalis*.

Family: Agamidae Former name: *Amphibolurus fordi; Phthanodon fordi*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**13-18 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**1-2 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert and semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**100 × 40 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 3 adults
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**35-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-25 °C**
Humidity	**20-40%**
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**
Clutch size	**2-5 eggs**
Incubation	**56-77 days** at 28-32 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix III**
EU annex	**Annex C**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Very little is known about the husbandry of *Ctenophorus fordi*. The climate in its range is dry, with hot summers and cool winters.
TEMPERATURE	The air in the enclosure is 25-30 °C by day, and the cool end is about 25 °C. Under the basking spot the surface should be 35-40 °C and no higher than 43 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be low, about 20-40%; the figure is an estimate based on the habitat. The enclosure is dry and well ventilated. Provide fresh drinking water in a shallow, heavy dish, changed every day, and do not mist the sand.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and needs strong light and UVB. Ferguson zone 3 is a good starting point; the zone is borrowed from other diurnal desert agamids.
FEEDING	The species eats almost exclusively small arthropods, especially ants. In the enclosure, small crickets, small cockroaches and other small insects are the staple.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is quick and shy and immediately takes cover in a tussock or down in the sand if frightened. Handling is not necessary and stresses the animal. Males and females both signal with head bobs when they meet another animal.
NATIVE RANGE	Australia.