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AGAMAS

Bell's Forest Dragon

Gonocephalus bellii

Gonocephalus bellii is a forest dragon with a heavy nuchal and dorsal crest, living in montane forest on the Thai and Malay peninsulas. It perches vertically on tree trunks, shifts between greyish green and brown, and drinks water droplets from leaves and bark. Little is known about its care, so this guide draws on the closely related *Gonocephalus chamaeleontinus*. The species is for experienced keepers only.

Family: Agamidae Former name: *Lophyrus bellii; Lophyrus bornensis*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**30-40 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**8-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 60 × 120 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Basking spot	**28-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**80-95%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**3-5 eggs**
Incubation	**70-90 days** at 25-26 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about the care of *Gonocephalus bellii*, and the species is rarely kept. The climate in its range is cool and humid because of the elevation.
TEMPERATURE	*Gonocephalus bellii* needs 22-26 °C by day. Provide a localised basking spot under a lamp at 28-32 °C where the animal can bask, and make it possible to choose a cooler spot higher or lower up.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity for *Gonocephalus bellii* should be high all year, about 80-95%. The figure is borrowed from *Gonocephalus chamaeleontinus*. An automatic misting system is the best solution.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	In addition to the droplets, a large water bowl can stand in the enclosure for *Gonocephalus bellii*, shallow enough that the animal can easily climb out again.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Gonocephalus bellii* is diurnal and needs UVB light and a basking spot. The UVB tube should be a high-output one, so the animal can synthesise D3 and absorb calcium. Ferguson zone 2 is borrowed from *Gonocephalus chamaeleontinus*.
FEEDING	Forest dragons eat insects, worms and snails. The diet for *Gonocephalus bellii* is not documented, so the advice is borrowed from *Gonocephalus chamaeleontinus*: earthworms, waxworms, mealworms and crickets.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Gonocephalus bellii* and the other forest dragons are shy and prefer to sit perfectly still. They are animals to watch, not to pick up. Work calmly when you open the enclosure, and stick to what is necessary.
NATIVE RANGE	Thailand and Malaysia.