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AGAMAS

Common butterfly lizard

Leiolepis belliana

Leiolepis belliana is a ground-dwelling, diurnal agamid from South-East Asia that digs deep burrows in sandy soil. It has yellow spots on the back and orange and black crossbands on the flanks, and it can spread its flank skin like a butterfly. The species grows to 40-50 cm, mostly tail, feeds mainly on insects and requires a dry enclosure with a deep, diggable substrate, strong heat and UVB.

Family: Agamidae English name: Common Butterfly Lizard Former name: *Leiolepis bellii; Uromastyx belliana*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**40-50 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**8-10 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Savanna**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 50 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**26-35 °C**
Basking spot	**35-37 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-25 °C**
Humidity	**30-50%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects and plants**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**3-8 eggs**
Incubation	**55-75 days** at 28-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

A pair needs an enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 50 cm (length × width × height). Floor area is most important, because the species is ground-dwelling, but the height must accommodate a deep substrate.

TEMPERATURE

The basking spot should have a surface temperature of 35-37 °C. Watch the animal's behaviour, and adjust accordingly. The air at the warm end is 30-35 °C, and the cool end is 26-29 °C. At night the temperature falls to 20-25 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity should be 30-50 %, and the enclosure should be dry. Spraying is normally not necessary, except in very dry surroundings. The animal needs a bowl of fresh water, large enough to bathe in.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and basks in open country, so it needs strong light and UVB. Use a tube or LED of 6,500 K over the whole enclosure and a T5 HO UVB tube of 10-12 % over the basking spot.

FEEDING

Leiolepis belliana eats mostly insects, but also plants. In the wild it takes grasshoppers, beetle larvae, butterflies and crabs, and the animals also eat grass and other plants.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The animal is shy and fast and flees into a burrow when anything moves. It tolerates handling poorly. In the wild the animals are monogamous and share a burrow with a partner. The animals can be kept singly or in pairs.

NATIVE RANGE

Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia.