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AGAMAS

Chinese Water Dragon

Physignathus cocincinus

Physignathus cocincinus is a large, green, semi-aquatic agamid from wooded streams in South-East Asia. It grows to about 90 cm, of which more than two thirds is tail. The species is diurnal, climbs and dives, and needs a very large, tall and humid enclosure with a deep water section, strong UVB and a warm basking spot. A large share of the animals in the trade are wild-caught.

Family: Agamidae Former name: *Dilophyrus mentager*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**70-90 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**250-600 g**
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Rainforest and wetland**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**180 × 90 × 180 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**35-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-24 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water section** depth 15-30 cm
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, plants and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**5-18 eggs**
Incubation	**60-75 days** at 29-31 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Vulnerable (VU)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	A single adult needs an enclosure of at least 180 × 90 × 180 cm (length × width × height). The species is large and active, climbs and swims, and in a smaller enclosure it becomes stressed and injures itself.
TEMPERATURE	The basking spot must be 35-40 °C, measured with a digital thermometer on the branch itself. Juveniles need a basking spot at the low end of the range. The air in the cool end must be 25-28 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be 60-80 %, highest in the morning (about 75-80 %) and lower in the evening (about 50-60 %). This is achieved with 1-2 daily mistings or an automatic rain system, a damp substrate and a large water section.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The water section must be large enough for the animal to dive and swim: at least 15 cm deep, preferably more, and it should cover a third to a half of the floor.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and needs strong UVB corresponding to Ferguson zone 3. Use a T5 HO tube with 10-12 % UVB in a reflective fitting on the same side as the heat lamps.
FEEDING	*Physignathus cocincinus* is omnivorous, but lives mostly on insects. Young animals eat almost only insects, and plants are added with age. Hatchlings under 3 months: small crickets every day.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Physignathus cocincinus* is shy and sensitive to stress, especially wild-caught animals. Let a new animal settle in without handling, and then begin feeding from tweezers so the animal comes to you.
NATIVE RANGE	China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand.