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AGAMAS

Sahara Mastigure

Uromastyx geyri

Uromastyx geyri is a small, slender spiny-tailed lizard from the rocky uplands of the Hoggar and Aïr mountains in the central Sahara. The male is vermilion, orange or bright yellow, the female paler. It reaches about 36 cm, is almost purely herbivorous and digs into a deep substrate. It needs a large, hot, dry enclosure with strong UVB and is a lizard to watch rather than to handle.

Family: Agamidae Former name: *Uromastix geyri; Uromastyx temporalis*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**30-36 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-25 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Rock-dwelling, terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**28-35 °C**
Basking spot	**45-55 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-22 °C**
Humidity	**20-40%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Winter rest	**14-16 °C** 10-13 weeks
Diet	**Plants**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**8-22 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1**
Incubation	**91-96 days** at 30.5 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult needs an enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 60 cm (length × width × height), and bigger is better. That is larger than ordinary glass terrariums offer, so choose an enclosure made of wood, PVC or plastic with a glass front.

TEMPERATURE

The basking spot should have a surface temperature of 45-50 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer directly under the lamp, and the hottest stones may reach 55 °C. The rest of the enclosure sits at 28-35 °C during the day.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity should be low, 20-40%, measured at substrate level on the cool side. Persistently high humidity makes the animal ill.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and needs strong light. Use an LED lamp or a fluorescent tube of about 6500 K as daylight in addition to the heat lamp.

FEEDING

Uromastyx geyri is herbivorous and easily becomes too fat in captivity. From spring to autumn, fresh wild plants make the best food: dandelion leaves and flowers, plantain, sow thistle and clover, always free of pesticides.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Adults are calm and sedentary, but males are territorial towards each other. In the breeding season they bob their heads, hiss, arch their backs and bite each other on the neck and flanks. Never keep two males together.

NATIVE RANGE

Algeria, Mali and Niger.