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ANGUIDS

Mexican Beaded Lizard

Heloderma horridum

Heloderma horridum is a large, black and yellow-spotted venomous lizard from the tropical dry forests on Mexico's Pacific side, larger than *Heloderma suspectum*. A bite is a medical emergency. The species grows to 60-90 cm, burrows and climbs, feeds on eggs and small vertebrates, and requires experience, firm routines and safe handling.

Family: Helodermatidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**60-90 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**800-2,000 g**
Lifespan	**20-30 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal, terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and dry forest**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**180 × 80 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Winter rest	**15-20 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**36 months**
Clutch size	**3-13 eggs**
Incubation	**208 days** at 26 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little documented knowledge exists about the care of *Heloderma horridum*.
TEMPERATURE	The enclosure should have a gradient from 22 to 32 °C by day; active animals keep a body temperature of around 30 °C. Under the heat lamp there is a warmer spot, and the animal must be able to move away from the heat.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity is 40-60 %, and part of the substrate is kept slightly damp so that the animal can dig into moister soil.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is most active in the late afternoon, at dusk and at night, but a fixed lighting rhythm gives a natural daily cycle. The light is on for 10-13 hours a day, shortest in the cool period.
FEEDING	In the wild the species feeds mainly on eggs from birds and reptiles and on nestlings. It also takes small birds, mammals, frogs, lizards and insects. The fat reserve in the tail carries it through the dry season.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	SAFETY: the animal is venomous and strong. It bites and holds on and can turn surprisingly fast, especially in the evening and at night. Follow these rules: Never touch the animal with bare hands.
NATIVE RANGE	Mexico.