herpy

CAECILIANS

Banna Caecilian

Ichthyophis bannanicus

Ichthyophis bannanicus is China's only caecilian, a burrowing species from southern China and Vietnam. The adults live in damp soil beside streams and rice paddies, where the female guards her eggs in an earth chamber. The larvae live in water and are predators for about two years before they metamorphose. Care in captivity is almost unknown.

Family: Ichthyophiidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**30-40 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-10 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Burrowing**
Habitat	**Rainforest and wetland**
Skin toxins	**None known**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**50 × 30 × 35 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-24 °C**
Humidity	**90-100%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Larvae in water**
Egg-laying site	**On the ground**
Eggs per season	**24-68**
Larval period	**730 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Small aquatic invertebrates (daphnia, mosquito larvae)**
Parental care	**Guards the eggs**

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 *Ichthyophis bannanicus*. The climate in its range is warm and humid with a rainy and a dry season, and the adults live in wet, loose soil beside streams and rice paddies.

TEMPERATURE

Keep 22-26 °C by day and 21-24 °C at night with small, slow fluctuations. The temperature must never fall below 18 °C, because then the species goes dormant or dies.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

Humidity must be 90-100 %, and the substrate must be evenly damp throughout its depth. Mist as needed, and leave part of the substrate slightly drier so that the animal can choose. Moisten with rainwater or chlorine-free water.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

Adults do not need a water bowl or an aquatic section; they get moisture from the wet substrate and from condensation on the walls. Water is only necessary for the larvae, which live in water from hatching until metamorphosis.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species lives underground and does not need UVB. The normal day-night rhythm of the room is enough. The box is kept dark and must not stand in direct sunlight or by a window.

FEEDING

Small and medium earthworms are the staple; cut them up for young animals. Small snails and termites can be offered for variety, because they are a large part of the diet in the wild.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species lives hidden and burrows down, and a healthy animal lies buried most of the time. It is calm, but escapes through even small gaps.

NATIVE RANGE

China, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand.