herpy

CHAMELEONS

Big-nosed Chameleon

Calumma nasutum

Calumma nasutum is one of the smallest chameleons, only 8-10 cm long, with a soft flap on the snout. The name was moved in 2025: after a redefinition it applies only to a rare form from Ranomafana and the coast near Mananjary in Madagascar, and many animals sold under the name are other species. The species needs cool, humid air and is for the experienced keeper.

Family: Chamaeleonidae Former name: *Camaeleon nasutus; Chamaeleo nasutus; Calumma nasuta*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**8-10 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**3-5 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest and montane forest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**40 × 40 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**20-25 °C**
Temperature, night	**15-20 °C**
Humidity	**70-100%**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects and small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies)**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**2-4 eggs**
Incubation	**60-90 days** at 20-22 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

About the species

Calumma nasutum is one of the smallest chameleons, 8-10 cm in total, tail included. The male has a relatively large, round and usually bright yellow-green flap on the snout, which is soft and serrated at the edge. The female has only a small red stub, about a millimetre long. There is no dorsal crest, and the casque is relatively high. The scales on the arms, legs, casque and cheeks are slightly larger than those on the body.

Excited males turn pale grey to white with blue streaks on the back, tail, arms and legs and larger blue scales on the head. On the flanks they have two broad, pale yellow-green bands. Females are more subdued, reddish-brown with a paler, net-like pattern between the scales.

The delimitation of the species has been unclear and was changed recently. *C. nasutum* belongs to the *Calumma gallus* complex, a group of small chameleons with a soft flap on the snout. For decades the name was used for a whole series of similar-looking chameleons from large parts of eastern Madagascar. In 2020 the name was tied to another form, which has since been given its own name, *Calumma hofreiteri*. In 2025 DNA from the type specimen was analysed, and the name now

belongs to the form from the Ranomafana area. The description here applies to the narrowly defined species. Most of what has been written about *C. nasutum* in hobby literature rests on the broad species concept and may concern other species; this includes the care figures below.

Distribution and habitat

Calumma nasutum in the new delimitation is known from only three places in the southern part of the eastern highlands of Madagascar: Ranomafana National Park, the nearby locality Ambohitsara and the area near Mananjary on the east coast. The range hardly exceeds 5,000 km². In the national park the species occurs only in small forest patches. The other two places are unprotected and under heavy pressure from slash-and-burn agriculture. Following the redefinition, the species should be assessed as Endangered (EN); the current IUCN assessment is still LC and dates from before the redefinition.

Since 2014 Madagascar has had an annual export quota under the name *C. nasutum*, but it rests on the old, broad species concept, and most animals exported under the name have been other species. Confusion is still common.

> **Native range:** Madagascar.

HABITAT

In Ranomafana the species lives in humid montane rainforest at about 1,000 m, and near Mananjary it occurs in the lowlands close to the coast. The forest is steep, with rocky ground, ferns and large trees covered in lichen and moss. Mornings are often foggy, and the forest never dries out completely.

In Ranomafana the daytime temperature is around 25 °C, and in sunlit spots it can reach a little over 30 °C. At night it falls to around 20 °C in the rainy season and to 15 °C in the dry season. High humidity and cool nights characterise the climate.

Read more: Humidity, misting and ventilation

Care

THE ENCLOSURE

At least 40 × 40 × 60 cm (length × width × height) is enough for one adult, and larger is better. There are no documented dimensions for the narrowly defined species, and the figures are taken from older descriptions of the species in the broad sense. Choose a mesh or hybrid enclosure with good ventilation.

Furnish with dense planting, thin branches at several heights and a layer of leaf litter on the floor. Keep the air moving so that leaves and branches dry before night.

Keep one animal per enclosure.

TEMPERATURE

By day it should be 20-25 °C, in winter preferably around 20 °C, and at night 15-20 °C, in the winter months ideally down towards 15 °C as in the cool dry season from April to October. The species does not need a proper basking spot, and the temperature must not exceed 30 °C.

Use a gentle heat lamp mounted high up if the room temperature is below 20 °C, and check the temperature on the branches with an IR thermometer.

Read more: Heat and temperature

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity should be high, 70-100 %, highest at night. Provide drip or light rain several times a day in short periods, so that droplets stand on the leaves; the animal drinks the droplets and does not take water from a bowl. Make sure plants and branches can dry between showers and that the air moves.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal. Provide bright daylight for 12 hours a day. UVB is recommended. There are no species-specific figures; the level is borrowed from *Calumma brevicorne*. Use a T5 HO UVB tube so that the UV index on the highest branches is around 2-3, and provide plenty of shade in the enclosure. Check with a UV meter.

Read more: Lighting and UVB

FEEDING

C. nasutum eats small insects: fruit flies, springtails, small crickets and small grasshoppers. Feeders should be small. Juveniles are fed every day, adults every other day. Amounts and feeding schedules for the species are not documented.

The feeder insects should themselves be fed on greens and grain. Dust the food with calcium, and give calcium with D3 and a multivitamin sparingly according to a fixed schedule.

Read more: Feeder animals: keeping and breeding Read more: Calcium, vitamins and supplements

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is calm and not particularly shy. It is kept singly, and males must not be able to see each other. Handling should be limited to what is necessary, and a new animal is given two weeks in peace. The animal is small and easy to overlook, so check the enclosure carefully when opening it. Stress shows as dark colours and reduced appetite.

Breeding

SEXUAL MATURITY AND SEXING

The male is recognised by the large, round snout flap and the female by the small, red snout stub. Age at sexual maturity is not documented.

MATING

Mating almost always takes place early in the morning. The male's courtship is similar to that of other chameleons. Bring the female to the male's enclosure under supervision, and separate the animals if the female refuses or the male is aggressive. Also separate them once mating is over.

EGG-LAYING AND CLUTCHES

About 40 days after mating the female lays 2-4 eggs. She hides them under leaf litter on the forest floor, like species of the genera *Brookesia* and *Rhampholeon*. Give her a container with moist leaf litter and soil. The number of clutches a year is not documented. The figures for egg laying and incubation rest on older descriptions of the species in the broad sense.

Read more: Incubating eggs

INCUBATION

The eggs are incubated at room temperature, around 20-22 °C, and hatch after 60-90 days, usually around 90 days. Most *Calumma* species need a cool resting phase in the egg, but whether this applies here is not documented.

REARING THE YOUNG

The young are very small and should be kept separately in a densely planted enclosure with the same climate as the adults. They are given fruit flies and springtails every day and drip or light rain several times a day. Amounts and growth are not documented.

Health and common mistakes

Typical problems and husbandry errors:

- Dehydration in dry air or without enough drip.
- Respiratory infections and mould in still, wet air.
- Overheating.
- Metabolic bone disease (MBD) from too little calcium or UVB.
- Parasites and poor condition in animals of uncertain origin, which often arrive exhausted.

With such small and easily confused animals it is important to know the species. Ask the seller about the animal's lineage and identification. Lifespan is not documented; the 3-5 years in the fact box is an estimate. Contact a vet experienced with reptiles if the animal stops eating, or if it is limp, dark in colour or has difficulty breathing.

Read more: Common diseases and signs of illness

Always ask someone who knows

This guide is a good place to start, but it cannot replace experience. Animals differ, and much of what matters most is learned from people who have kept the species for years. Talk to a breeder, an experienced keeper or a vet who knows reptiles and amphibians before you get the animal - and again if anything looks wrong.