herpy

CHAMELEONS

Flap-necked Chameleon

Chamaeleo dilepis

Chamaeleo dilepis is a medium-sized, tree-dwelling chameleon from savannas, scrub and open woodland across much of sub-Saharan Africa. It is recognised by the two skin flaps at the back of the head and a white stripe along the flank. The species is hardy for a chameleon, but almost all animals in the trade are wild-caught. It needs a tall mesh enclosure with UVB, drinks only droplets and must be kept alone.

Family: Chamaeleonidae Former name: *Chamaeleo angusticoronatus; Chamaeleo bilobus; Chamaeleo capellii; Chamaeleo isabellinus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**20-35 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**3-8 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Savanna and dry forest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 45 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**32-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-20 °C**
Humidity	**50-70%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**20-75 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**300-365 days** at 27-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult needs a mesh enclosure of at least 60 × 45 × 90 cm (length × width × height). For a large female, 60 × 60 × 90 cm is better, and larger is always an advantage. Juveniles can be kept in 40 × 40 × 75 cm.

TEMPERATURE

During the day the temperature in the enclosure should be 25-30 °C, and on a basking branch it should be 32-35 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The humidity should be about 50-60 %, and after misting it may rise towards 70 %, as long as the enclosure dries out again. Plants help to hold the humidity.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and sun-loving and needs strong light for 12 hours and darkness for 12 hours. Full-spectrum light and UVB are necessary, because the animal makes D3 in its skin and needs it to absorb calcium.

FEEDING

The species eats insects: crickets, grasshoppers, cockroaches (e.g. *Blaptica dubia*), silkworms, hornworms, black soldier flies and their larvae, and in smaller amounts mealworms and waxworms, which are fatty.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Chamaeleo dilepis is mild and calm compared with many other chameleons, but it is an animal to watch, not one to pick up. Handling stresses it and should be done only when necessary.

NATIVE RANGE

Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Eswatini, Lesotho, Angola, Congo - Kinshasa, Congo - Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Nigeria, Togo, Burundi and Rwanda.