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CHAMELEONS

Senegal Chameleon

Chamaeleo senegalensis

Chamaeleo senegalensis is a medium-sized, arboreal chameleon from humid savanna and forest edges in tropical West Africa. It is a plain green to olive-brown and has no horns or skin flaps at all. The species is common in the trade, where almost all animals are wild-caught. It needs a tall mesh enclosure with UVB, drinks only droplets and must live alone.

Family: Chamaeleonidae Former name: *Chamaeleo gymnocephalus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**20-30 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**3-5 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Savanna and dry forest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**45 × 45 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-27 °C**
Basking spot	**29-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**50-70%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**5-6 months**
Clutch size	**20-70 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**210-365 days** at 22-27 °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 45 × 45 × 90 cm (length × width × height). Bigger is always an advantage. Juveniles can be kept in 40 × 40 × 75 cm.
TEMPERATURE	By day the temperature in the enclosure should be 22-27 °C, and on a basking branch it should be 29-32 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Air humidity should be 50-70 %, and it is maintained by misting several times a day over the whole enclosure. Live plants help to hold the humidity, and a cold fogger or a timed misting system may be necessary.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and needs strong light and UVB for 12 hours and darkness for 12 hours. UVB is necessary, because the animal makes D3 in its skin and needs it to absorb calcium.
FEEDING	The species is an insectivore and needs live insects: crickets, silkworms, hornworms, cockroaches such as *Blaptica dubia* and the occasional superworm. Waxworms and mealworms are fatty and are given only now and then.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Chamaeleo senegalensis* is relatively calm compared with other chameleons, but it is an animal to watch and not one to pick up. Handling causes stress and may be done only when necessary.
NATIVE RANGE	Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Sudan.