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CHAMELEONS

Indian Chameleon

Chamaeleo zeylanicus

Chamaeleo zeylanicus is a large, slow-moving chameleon from India, Sri Lanka and south-eastern Pakistan, the only chameleon on the Indian subcontinent. It reaches 35-40 cm in length and turns deep green with dark spots when threatening. Little is known about its care, and the species is difficult to keep in the long term. It must live alone in a tall mesh enclosure with UVB.

Family: Chamaeleonidae Former name: *Chamaeleo coromandelicus; Chamaeleo zebra; Chamaeleo zeylonicus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**35-40 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**3-5 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Dry forest**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 60 × 120 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**32-35 °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**
Clutch size	**22-40 eggs**
Incubation	**240 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	Little is known about the care of *Chamaeleo zeylanicus*. The species is kept only in small numbers, captive breeding has not been documented, and it is difficult to keep in the long term without a large, densely planted setup.
TEMPERATURE	By 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	Humidity should be 50-70 %, and the enclosure should have good airflow, so branches and leaves can dry between mistings. Mist plants and branches twice a day, so there are droplets the animal can lick.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and needs strong light for 12 hours and darkness for 12 hours. UVB is necessary, because the animal needs D3 to absorb calcium.
FEEDING	The species is an insectivore and needs live insects: crickets, locusts, silkworms, hornworms and cockroaches such as *Blaptica dubia*. Variety is important. Waxworms and mealworms are fatty and are given only occasionally.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Chamaeleo zeylanicus* is an animal to look at and not to handle. It sits still in the plants, sways slowly and lies in wait for prey.
NATIVE RANGE	India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.