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CHAMELEONS

Panther Chameleon

Furcifer pardalis

Furcifer pardalis is a large, brightly coloured chameleon from the northern and eastern coastal lowlands of Madagascar. The males' colours vary with origin and are among the most striking of any lizard, while the females are more subdued in orange, brown and pink. The species breeds readily, but requires a tall enclosure, UVB, high humidity at night and a life alone. Females live briefly, up to 3 years.

Family: Chamaeleonidae Former name: *Chamaeleo pardalis; Chamaeleo ater; Chamaeleo guentheri*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**30-51 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**2-6 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Dry forest and rainforest**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 60 × 120 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-25 °C**
Basking spot	**29-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**15-21 °C**
Humidity	**50-100%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 4
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**6-8 months**
Clutch size	**10-46 eggs**
Incubation	**180-365 days** at 22 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult needs an enclosure of at least 60 × 60 × 120 cm (length × width × height). This is a minimum, which makes it possible to create a temperature gradient and climbing opportunities above one another.

TEMPERATURE

The daytime temperature is 22-25 °C, and at night it falls to 15-21 °C. Cold nights down towards 15 °C are unproblematic if the animal can warm up in the morning. The basking branch should have a surface temperature of 29-32 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity should alternate over the course of the day: about 50-60 % by day and 75-100 % at night. The figures are not critical, but the rhythm is important. The chameleon does not drink from a bowl, but from droplets.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and needs strong light. Fit a long T5 HO tube or an LED bar of 6,500 K over the whole length of the enclosure, on for 12 hours a day and off completely at night. Provide no light at night. UVB is necessary.

FEEDING

Furcifer pardalis is an insectivore. Offer a varied diet of dubia roaches, banana roaches, crickets, grasshoppers, silkworms, hornworms, black soldier flies and their larvae, bluebottles, stick insects and newly hatched mantises.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

F. pardalis is a territorial species that lives alone except for mating. Males that meet change colour, inflate the body and bob, and losers turn dull and dark. This can lead to fights.

NATIVE RANGE

Madagascar.