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CHAMELEONS

Crested Chameleon

Trioceros cristatus

Trioceros cristatus is a medium-sized chameleon from the lowland forests of West and Central Africa. The male has a tall, fan-shaped sail crest on the back and tail, and the skin between the throat scales is bright red or orange. The species is difficult to keep and needs constantly high humidity, so it is only for the very experienced keeper.

Family: Chamaeleonidae Former name: *Chamaeleo cristatus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**25-28 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**3-5 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 60 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**23-25 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-23 °C**
Humidity	**80-100%**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**11-37 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
Incubation	**240-300 days** at 19-22 °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 *Trioceros cristatus*, and the species is very difficult to keep, even for experienced keepers. An adult needs an enclosure of at least 60 × 60 × 90 cm (length × width × height).

TEMPERATURE

The temperature should be fairly constant: 23-25 °C by day and only a couple of degrees lower at night, 20-23 °C. The species rarely basks, so a strong hot spot is not needed.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The species requires an extremely humid, almost wet environment. An ultrasonic fogger that runs constantly and lays dew in the enclosure, and an even drip system during the day, cover the need.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal. It rarely basks, but benefits from plenty of UVB, and two UVB tubes over the enclosure can be used. Zone 2 is an estimate based on related forest chameleons such as *Trioceros deremensis*.

FEEDING

Trioceros cristatus is an insectivore. Most ordinary feeder insects are taken readily, but the species is not an aggressive hunter.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is kept individually. Temperament varies from shy (usually the males) to aggressive (usually the females). Several animals together cause stress, and handling is limited to what is necessary.

NATIVE RANGE

Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo - Brazzaville, Gabon, Nigeria, Ghana and Togo.