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IGUANAS

Brown Basilisk

Basiliscus vittatus

Basiliscus vittatus is a fast, long-legged lizard from waterside habitats in Mexico and Central America, known for running on two legs across water. The male grows to 60 cm including the tail and carries a large head crest. The species is diurnal, feeds mostly on insects and needs a tall, humid enclosure with UVB, a warm basking spot and a water section.

Family: Corytophanidae Former name: *Cristasaurus mitrella; Dactylocalotes elisa*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**35-60 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-8 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal, terrestrial and semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Dry forest, rainforest and wetland**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**90 × 90 × 120 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**35-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**23-26 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water section**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects, fruit and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly, in pairs or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**6-15 months**
Clutch size	**2-18 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-5**
Incubation	**55-70 days** at 28-31 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	A pair or a male with two females needs a tall enclosure of at least 90 × 90 × 120 cm (length × width × height), and larger is better.
TEMPERATURE	The air should be kept at 25-30 °C during the day, and the basking spot should have a surface temperature of 35-40 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer. At night 23-26 °C is suitable.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be 60-80 %. Mist the enclosure and foliage 1-2 times a day, or use a fogging or rain system on a timer, and measure with a hygrometer.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The animal bathes and spends time in the water, and the water section must be large enough for the whole animal to lie in it. A filtered water tub or a waterfall keeps the water clean and raises humidity.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Basiliscus vittatus* is diurnal and needs UVB all day to produce D3 and absorb calcium.
FEEDING	*Basiliscus vittatus* feeds mostly on insects and other arthropods, but also takes fallen berries, and older animals eat more plant matter.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is shy, fast and stressed by handling. Animals that are picked up flee or bite. If an animal is picked up, it should be done calmly and only when necessary. The species is an animal to observe, not one to hold.
NATIVE RANGE	Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama.