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IGUANAS

Hernandez's Helmeted Basilisk

Corytophanes hernandesii

Corytophanes hernandesii is a slender, arboreal lizard from the forests of southern Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras with an angular, bony helmet on the head. It sits motionless for hours waiting for large insects, changes colour from brown to yellow, orange and almost black, and is very shy. It needs a tall, humid enclosure, UVB, large live feeder insects and peace.

Family: Corytophanidae Former name: *Chamaeleopsis hernandesii; Corytophanes chamaeleopsis; Corytophanes hernandezii; Corytophanes mexicanus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**25-35 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**5-8 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Dry forest and rainforest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 45 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-30 °C**
Basking spot	**32-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-24 °C**
Humidity	**60-90%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 1
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**3-11 eggs**
Incubation	**90 days** at 26 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	A single adult needs a tall enclosure of at least 60 × 45 × 90 cm (length × width × height). Larger is better, especially wider.
TEMPERATURE	The air should be 26-30 °C by day, and the warmest spot, a thick branch under a lamp, should have a surface temperature of 32-35 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be 60-90 %, lowest in the middle of the day and highest after misting and at night.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Corytophanes hernandesii* is diurnal and needs UVB all day, even though it is a shade species. The UVB lamp should give Ferguson zone 1, i.e. a low UV index on the highest branches and almost none lower in the enclosure.
FEEDING	The species is insectivorous and takes large, slow prey: cockroaches (such as discoids and dubia), silkworms, hornworms, grasshoppers, superworms and earthworms.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is shy and peaceful but sensitive to disturbance, and it is better suited to observing than to handling. It often sits completely still for hours and moves slowly.
NATIVE RANGE	Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras.