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IGUANAS

## Black Spiny-tailed Iguana

# *Ctenosaura similis*

*Ctenosaura similis* is the largest species in the genus *Ctenosaura*: a powerful, fast, diurnal iguana from Mexico and Central America with a tail ringed with pointed scales and a crest along the back. It grows to 130 cm, is mostly a herbivore as an adult and rarely becomes tame. It needs a very large enclosure, strong heat and UVB and can live for over 20 years.

Family: Iguanidae  Former name: *Ctenosaura completa; Iguana similis*

KEY FACTS

### THE ANIMAL

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|---|---|
| Adult size | **80-130 cm**<br>total length incl. tail |
| Lifespan | **15-25 years** |
| Active | **By day** |
| Lifestyle | **Arboreal, rock-dwelling and terrestrial** |
| Habitat | **Savanna, dry forest and rocky terrain** |
| Difficulty | **Experienced** |

### CARE

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|---|---|
| Min. enclosure | **200 × 150 × 130 cm**<br>L × W × H for 2 adults |
| Temperature, day | **28-33 °C** |
| Basking spot | **40-45 °C** |
| Temperature, night | **18-24 °C** |
| Humidity | **50-80%** |
| Water | **Water dish** |
| UVB | **Essential**<br>Ferguson zone 3 |
| Diet | **Insects, fruit and plants** |
| Kept | **Singly, in pairs or one male with several females** |

### BREEDING

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|---|---|
| Reproduction | **Egg-laying** |
| Sexually mature | **21-48 months** |
| Clutch size | **12-88 eggs** |
| Clutches per year | **1** |
| Incubation | **90-120 days**<br>at 28-30 °C |

### PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

## Care at a glance

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| THE ENCLOSURE | A pair of adults needs an enclosure of at least 200 × 150 × 130 cm (length × width × height). In practice this means a custom-built enclosure or a small room. |
| TEMPERATURE | The air in the enclosure should be 28-33 °C during the day and 18-24 °C at night. |
| HUMIDITY AND WATER | Relative humidity should be about 50-60 % during the day and 70-80 % at night. The figures apply to the genus. |
| LIGHTING AND UVB | The species is diurnal and needs strong light, heat and UVB. UVB is necessary for the production of vitamin D3 and thus for calcium metabolism and breeding, and iguanas need more UVB than most other reptiles. |
| FEEDING | Adults eat mainly plants. |
| BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING | *Ctenosaura similis* is shy and defends itself, and only a few animals become so tame that they can be taken out of the enclosure. |
| NATIVE RANGE | Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. |