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IGUANAS

Giant horned lizard

Phrynosoma asio

Phrynosoma asio is the largest and most slender of the horned lizards. It lives in the dry forests along the Pacific coast of southern Mexico, grows to 12 cm from snout to vent, and has a longer tail and a more lizard-like body than its northern relatives. It is diurnal, eats many kinds of insects and has a long rest period in the dry season.

Family: Phrynosomatidae Former name: *Phrynosoma spinimentum*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**10-12 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**7-13 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and dry forest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 50 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**27-30 °C**
Basking spot	**38-42 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**30-60%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Winter rest	**18-20 °C** 20-26 weeks
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**13-16 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1**
Incubation	**77-84 days** at 30-32 °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 *Phrynosoma asio*, but adults are relatively easy to keep, because they eat ordinary feeder insects. Temperature and lighting are based on *Phrynosoma cornutum*, which is better known in captivity.
TEMPERATURE	The species needs a basking spot where the surface reaches 38-42 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The species comes from a climate with a wet summer and a dry winter, and its care should follow that rhythm. Humidity is not documented; 30-60% during the active period is an estimate based on the climate.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and needs strong light and UVB during the active period. Use a UVB tube (Ferguson zone 3, T5 HO 10-14%) or a combined UVB metal halide lamp over the basking spot. The zone is borrowed from *P. cornutum*.
FEEDING	Adult *Phrynosoma asio* eat many kinds of insects willingly and with a big appetite. Give crickets, grasshoppers and locusts in particular, and offer ants regularly.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Phrynosoma asio* is calm and moves in short stretches. It blends into the ground and often lies half-buried.
NATIVE RANGE	Mexico.