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IGUANAS

Regal horned lizard

Phrynosoma solare

Phrynosoma solare is a large, flat horned lizard from the deserts of southern Arizona, New Mexico and north-western Mexico. The female grows to 12 cm from snout to vent and has a crown of four large horns at the back of the head. The species is diurnal and feeds almost entirely on ants, and it is precisely this diet that makes it one of the most difficult lizards to keep in a vivarium.

Family: Phrynosomatidae Former name: *Phrynosoma regale; Phrynosoma solaris*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**10-12 cm** snout-vent length
Lifespan	**7-9 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert and semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**100 × 50 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**27-30 °C**
Basking spot	**38-42 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**20-40%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**7-33 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1**
Incubation	**40-61 days** at 27-30 °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 solare*. Its care is therefore based on its habitat: open, dry terrain with loose soil, strong sun and a diet of ants.

TEMPERATURE
The species is a sun-lover and needs a basking spot where the surface reaches 38-42 °C, measured with an infrared thermometer.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
Humidity should be low, 20-40%, and the vivarium should dry out completely during the day. The substrate must not be wet. The species hardly ever drinks from a bowl, but licks droplets from stones and plants.

LIGHTING AND UVB
The species is diurnal and spends the day in open sunlight, so it needs strong light and UVB all year round. Use a UVB tube (Ferguson zone 3, T5 HO 10-14%) or a combined UVB metal halide lamp over the basking spot.

FEEDING
Diet is the decisive limitation. In the wild, about 89% of the diet is ants, especially harvester ants, and the species eats large quantities. The rest is beetles, other insects and spiders.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
Phrynosoma solare is calm and lives alone. It does not make much of itself and is easy to overlook, because it blends into the ground. It is slow and moves in short stretches. Males signal with head-bobs and push-ups.

NATIVE RANGE
United States and Mexico.