herpy

IGUANAS

Common Chuckwalla

Sauromalus ater

Sauromalus ater is a broad-bodied, flattened iguana from the deserts of the south-western USA and north-western Mexico. It grows to 35-50 cm, is diurnal and feeds almost exclusively on plants. It needs a dry enclosure with a very hot basking spot, strong UVB and stable rock structures with crevices it can wedge itself into.

Family: Iguanidae Former name: *Euphryne obesus; Sauromalus australis; Sauromalus interbrachialis; Sauromalus obesus; Sauromalus shawi; Sauromalus townsendi*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**35-50 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**9 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Rock-dwelling and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Desert and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 60 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-35 °C**
Basking spot	**43-50 °C**
Temperature, night	**16-24 °C**
Humidity	**20-35%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 4
Diet	**Plants**
Kept	**Singly or one male with several females**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**24-84 months**
Clutch size	**5-16 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1**
Incubation	**85-95 days** at 27-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult needs an enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 60 cm (length × width × height). Floor area matters most, and height is less important. For each additional female, add about 0.2 m² of floor space.
TEMPERATURE	The air should be 26-35 °C during the day with a clear gradient. The basking spot should be 43-50 °C measured on the surface with an infrared thermometer, and the animal must always be able to withdraw from the heat.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The air in the species' range is very dry, and the enclosure should be kept dry: 20-35 % is suitable. The species does tolerate ordinary room air, however, so it is not necessary to control humidity.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The animal needs a low, stable water bowl that cannot tip over, with fresh water every day. Most of the fluid comes from the food, but the animal drinks now and then, and the bowl should be available at all times.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Sauromalus ater* is diurnal and basks intensely. It belongs to Ferguson zone 4, and UVB is essential.
FEEDING	*Sauromalus ater* is herbivorous. The basic diet is dark green leaves every day: dandelion leaves, Belgian endive, chicory, rocket, mustard greens and turnip greens.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Sauromalus ater* is calm and can become nearly tame if handled gently and regularly from a young age. It can react violently the moment it is grabbed, so take hold calmly.
NATIVE RANGE	United States and Mexico.