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SALAMANDERS AND NEWTS

Lake Patzcuaro Salamander

Ambystoma dumerilii

Ambystoma dumerilii is a large, fully aquatic salamander that never leaves the larval stage: it keeps fine, dense external gills, a tail fin and a flat, broad head throughout life. The species is found in only one lake in Mexico and is critically endangered in the wild. In the aquarium it needs cool, clean water with a gentle current and plenty of hiding places.

Family: Ambystomatidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**12-35 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-16 years**
Active	**At night**
Lifestyle	**Aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland**
Skin toxins	**None known**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**100 × 50 × 40 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**14-22 °C**
Temperature, night	**14-20 °C**
Humidity	**100%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 25-35 cm
Water temperature	**14-22 °C**
UVB	**Not required**
Diet	**Complete diet, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Stays in larval form for life (neoteny)**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Sexually mature	**18-24 months**
Eggs per season	**100-1,000**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
Hatching	**14-21 days**
Larval diet	**Other larvae and small aquatic invertebrates (daphnia, mosquito larvae)**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Critically Endangered (CR)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	*Ambystoma dumerilii* is kept in an aquarium with no land section, because the animal never leaves the water.
TEMPERATURE	The water should be 14-22 °C and must never reach 25 °C. In summer 18-22 °C is suitable.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	Humidity is of no importance, because the animal never leaves the water, and misting is not relevant. Under the aquarium lid the air above the water surface is saturated with moisture, which is why the box says 100 %.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	Neutral to slightly alkaline, medium-hard water suits: pH 7-8 and a conductivity of about 350-400 µS/cm. The lake is more alkaline, but it is not necessary to imitate it.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Ambystoma dumerilii* does not need UVB. Ordinary daylight tubes or LEDs are enough, and in a room with daylight from windows, artificial light is not necessary. Direct sun must be avoided, because it warms the water.
FEEDING	The species is a predator and takes large prey, which it sucks in with a sudden gape. Good staple foods are earthworms, thawed smelt and other freshwater fish of a suitable size, and sinking pellets for axolotls.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is nocturnal and stays mostly on the bottom.
NATIVE RANGE	Mexico.