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SALAMANDERS AND NEWTS

Sword-tailed Newt

Cynops ensicauda

Cynops ensicauda is the largest living newt in its genus and comes from the southern islands of Japan. It is brown to almost black above, with a yellow to orange belly and a distinct dorsal ridge. It is hardy and long-lived and tolerates more warmth than most of its relatives. The species is threatened by habitat loss and collecting, so captive-bred animals are the right choice.

Family: Salamandridae Former name: *Triturus ensicaudus* **Mild skin toxins**

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**11-18 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-25 years**
Active	**By day, at dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Rainforest and wetland**
Skin toxins	**Mild** Wash your hands after contact and keep your fingers away from your eyes and mouth
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**20-24 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-22 °C**
Humidity	**70-90%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 15-20 cm
Water temperature	**20-24 °C**
UVB	**Not required**
Winter rest	**12-16 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Insects and worms/snails**
Kept	**In pairs or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Larvae in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Sexually mature	**24-36 months**
Eggs per season	**20-60**
Hatching	**12-18 days**
Larval period	**90-180 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Small aquatic invertebrates (daphnia, mosquito larvae)**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Annex D**
IUCN	**Vulnerable (VU)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Two to three adults need an aquarium of at least 60 × 30 × 30 cm (about 50 litres). More animals need more space.
TEMPERATURE	The water should be 20-24 °C for most of the year. The species tolerates up to 30 °C briefly in summer, but the water should not stay above 28 °C for long. Larvae and juveniles do best above 20 °C.
HUMIDITY AND MISTING	The species lives in and near water, so humidity is not critical. Under a tight lid it is high, around 70-90 %. Any land area should be damp. Misting is not necessary.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The water level should be 15-20 cm. The water is filtered, but without a strong current, and changed regularly: about a quarter every week. Remove uneaten food. Use dechlorinated water at 20-24 °C.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is active both by day and at night and does not need special lighting. UVB is not necessary. Ordinary aquarium lighting suits the plants, and the days are shortened in winter.
FEEDING	The species takes almost anything that moves and is easy to feed.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is the least territorial and aggressive in the genus, so adults and juveniles of different ages can be kept together. Make sure every animal is eating so none loses out.
NATIVE RANGE	Japan.