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SALAMANDERS AND NEWTS

Northern Banded Newt

Ommatotriton ophryticus

Ommatotriton ophryticus is a large, sturdy newt of 12-17 cm from the mountain forests around the south-eastern Black Sea. In the water the male develops a tall, serrated dorsal crest and a tail spotted in blue and green. The species is cool-loving and needs cool, humid conditions and peace; it is among the more difficult newts to keep in an enclosure.

Family: Salamandridae Former name: *Triton ophryticus; Triturus vittatus ophryticus; Triturus ophryticus*

Mild skin toxins

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**12-17 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**8-15 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Montane forest and temperate woodland and meadow**
Skin toxins	**Mild** Wash your hands after contact and keep your fingers away from your eyes and mouth
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**10-18 °C**
Temperature, night	**5-12 °C**
Humidity	**80-100%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 10-20 cm
Water temperature	**8-18 °C**
UVB	**Not required**
Winter rest	**4-10 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Insects, small invertebrates (springtails, fruit flies) and worms/snails**
Kept	**In pairs or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Larvae in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Sexually mature	**36-48 months**
Eggs per season	**100-200**
Larval period	**60-120 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Small aquatic invertebrates (daphnia, mosquito larvae)**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Near Threatened (NT)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Little is known about the care of *Ommatotriton ophryticus*. The recommendations are based on the limited experience with the species and on the closely related *Ommatotriton vittatus* and the other European newts.

TEMPERATURE

Ommatotriton ophryticus is cool-loving. The daytime temperature should be 10-18 °C and the night-time temperature 5-12 °C.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

The land section must be kept damp, with a humidity of 80-100 %, but never waterlogged. Mist the moss with dechlorinated water when it starts to dry, and let the soil and moss hold the moisture.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

The water section must be 10-20 cm deep and 8-18 °C. Use dechlorinated tap water or rainwater. The species is sensitive to pollution and needs clean water: change a third of the water weekly, and remove food remains daily.

LIGHTING AND UVB

UVB is not necessary for the species, which is active at night and at dusk and avoids sun. Ordinary daylight or LED light for 10-12 hours a day is enough. The lamp must not heat the enclosure.

FEEDING

Ommatotriton ophryticus eats any small animal it can overpower. On land, springtails, woodlice, white worms, fruit flies, small slugs and spiders are suitable, and for adults also crickets and earthworms.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is shy, and many animals become stressed when disturbed. It can be kept in pairs or in a small group with more females than males.

NATIVE RANGE

Turkey, Georgia, Russia and Armenia.