herpy

CHAMELEONS

Veiled Chameleon

Chamaeleo calyptratus

Chamaeleo calyptratus is a large, robust chameleon from the mountain valleys of the Arabian Peninsula, known for the tall, helmet-like casque on its head. It breeds readily, grows fast and is hardy for a chameleon. In return it requires a tall, airy enclosure, UVB, water as dew and drips, and a life alone. Males reach up to 61 cm, and life is short: females live about 5 years, males up to 8.

Family: Chamaeleonidae Former name: *Chamaeleo calcaratus; Chamaeleo calcarifer* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**35-61 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**4-8 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and savanna**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 60 × 120 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-25 °C**
Basking spot	**27-30 °C**
Temperature, night	**13-18 °C**
Humidity	**40-100%**
Water	**No water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects and plants**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**4-6 months**
Clutch size	**20-85 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-3**
Incubation	**180-480 days** at 25-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult needs an enclosure of at least 60 × 60 × 120 cm (length × width × height). This is the smallest size that makes it possible to create a usable temperature gradient and climbing opportunities above one another.

TEMPERATURE

The daytime temperature in the enclosure is 22-25 °C. This is an ordinary room temperature, and a mesh enclosure follows the room. The basking spot is heated by a lamp that is on for only about three hours in the morning.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity follows a daily cycle: 40-50 % by day and 80-100 % at night. The figures are not critical, but the rhythm is important. The chameleon does not drink from a bowl, it drinks droplets.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and needs strong light. Fit a long T5 HO tube or an LED bar of 6,500 K over the whole length of the enclosure, on for 12 hours a day and off completely at night.

FEEDING

Chamaeleo calyptratus eats mostly insects: dubia roaches, banana roaches, crickets, locusts, silkworms, hornworms, black soldier flies and their larvae, bluebottles and stick insects.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

C. calyptratus is a shy species that often seems aggressive. When threatened it gapes, hisses, turns its body side-on and can bite. At other times it curls up, turns dark and plays dead.

NATIVE RANGE

Yemen and Saudi Arabia.