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SALAMANDERS AND NEWTS

Iberian Ribbed Newt

Pleurodeles waltl

Pleurodeles waltl is the largest newt in Europe: a sturdy, flat-headed and almost entirely aquatic species of 15-20 cm with a row of orange warts along the sides, from which the sharp ribs can protrude as a defence. It is hardy, tolerates cold and breeds readily in captivity, but does not thrive in warm water.

Family: Salamandridae Former name: *Salamandra fenestrata; Salamandra funebris; Salamandra major* Published 16 November 2026

Mild skin toxins

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**15-20 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**10-85 g**
Lifespan	**10-20 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Aquatic**
Habitat	**Wetland**
Skin toxins	**Mild** Wash your hands after contact and keep your fingers away from your eyes and mouth
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**100 × 50 × 50 cm** L × W × H for 5 adults
Temperature, day	**18-21 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-21 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Aquaterrarium** depth 15-20 cm
Water temperature	**18-21 °C**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Insects, complete diet and worms/snails**
Kept	**In pairs or in groups**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Development	**Larvae in water**
Egg-laying site	**In water**
Eggs per season	**100-1,000**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
Hatching	**7-21 days** at 20 °C
Larval period	**90-120 days** from hatching to metamorphosis
Larval diet	**Other larvae and small aquatic invertebrates (daphnia, mosquito larvae)**
Parental care	**None**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Pleurodeles waltl is almost entirely aquatic and is kept in an aquarium, not in an ordinary terrarium. For a group of five adults, 100 × 50 × 50 cm is a minimum, and more space is better.

TEMPERATURE

The water should be 18-21 °C all year round and preferably not above 21 °C. Some animals become stressed by heat, so the aquarium should be placed in a cool spot and out of direct sun.

HUMIDITY AND MISTING

P. waltl is almost entirely aquatic, so the humidity above the water matters little. 60-80 % is plenty, and a tight lid keeps the air humid. The floating land area must be kept wet. Misting is not necessary.

WATER AND WATER QUALITY

Outside the breeding season the water is kept 15-20 cm deep. For the breeding season it can be raised. The water must be still and clean with pH 6.9-7.2, ammonia below 0.01 ppm, nitrite below 0.05 ppm and nitrate below 100 ppm.

LIGHTING AND UVB

UVB is not necessary for *P. waltl*, but can be used. Shade and plant cover are more important than strong light, and part of the aquarium must always be in shade.

FEEDING

P. waltl is a greedy omnivore that takes most things it can swallow.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

P. waltl spends almost its whole life in the water and likes to lie hidden under stones and plants. The species is best kept in a group of at least five animals. Adults eat larvae and young, so the young are moved.

NATIVE RANGE

Spain, Portugal and Morocco.