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## Water Dragon

Adequate temperature		
	Hot spot	Cold spot
Day temperature	30 °C	24 °C
Night temperature	24 °C	20 °C

### Main Features :

The water dragon is a tropical reptile more and more popular because of its small size. It is easy to handle if you are used to it at a young age. Males can reach 90 cm while females can reach up to 60 cm. The life expectancy of this reptile is around 10 to 12 years. Juveniles are usually more brightly colored, have a white jaw and a white line on the back that will disappear with age. Males have one ridge, which extends from the nape of the neck to the base of the tail, larger than females.

### Captivity:

The habitat of the water dragon must be at least 1m X 1m X 2m high and must have a cover, a heating system and a lighting system emitting ultraviolet rays. The water dragon likes to climb. It is therefore necessary to provide several strong branches where he can climb as he pleases. High humidity (70-80%) and temperature (see table above) should be carefully monitored to preserve the health of your dragon. To maintain the proper temperature, the use of a heating mat, out of reach of the animal, can be used as well as a heat lamp not accessible for the latter. The carpet must be installed under the terrarium to avoid any direct contact. If the animal has access to the heating source, the risk of burns is close to 100%. A reptile does not feel the heat on its skin, it is only once it is too late that it feels the wound. The water dragon must have a UV lamp in its habitat! This lamp is essential to his good health because it provides a source of calcium that is normally provided by the sun during his tanning sessions. This lamp should work 10-12h per day and be changed every 6 months to maintain its effectiveness! At night this lamp should be off, unlike the heat lamp that must work all day. In order to better control the time of exposure to UV light, the degree of humidity and to maintain an adequate temperature, it is strongly recommended to obtain a thermometer and a hygrometer to better control the variants. The ideal is to get a thermostat that will regulate the temperature and humidity as well as a timer to better control the UV lighting time, but it is important to make sure that it always works, even after several years! The recommended substrate for a water dragon must retain moisture. The use of Aspen, sphagnum moss or chips is recommended. A gravel or sand substrate is not recommended due to the risk of the animal ingesting this product, which can cause intestinal blockage. The addition of a bowl of water, large enough to immerse in it is necessary for its good condition of guard.



## **Food :**

The water dragon is an omnivorous reptile. He therefore needs a varied diet to be filled at the nutritional level. For juveniles, you must feed your lizard every 2 days. Give him 2-3 times a week insects (goliath (most nutritious), crickets, waxed worms, silkworms, butterworms and mealworms alive or dead) as well as dark vegetables and finely chopped fruits. . The more weight your dragon takes, the more crickets you can give him. On the other hand, it is important not to give food too big, because this reptile can not open its mouth big enough for certain foods. The addition of mealworms, silkworms and baby mice gives him a good variety in terms of food. For adults, the frequency of meals is between 2 and 3 days. The menu is no different but the size of the food is bigger, while respecting the capabilities of your pet. It is important to ensure that the crickets offered are fed before being given to the dragon. Do not forget to give water to the crickets so that they do not die before being offered to the lizard. Adding a piece of wet sponge or a piece of potato to the cricket bowl is just fine.



## **Frequent health problems:**

- **Metabolic Bone Disease:** The lizard may suffer from anorexia, swelling around the bones, lethargy, or bone malformations due to old fractures.
- **Infections:** Infections can occur in the mouth (stomatitis), on the skin (bacterial or fungal) or in the form of abscess. This condition is often the cause of poor nutrition, excess moisture or poor hygiene.
- **Parasites:** A lizard can sometimes catch parasites in many ways, such as having been outside, being in a boarding house or pet store or coming from their live food (mice, insects, etc.). If the animal is not treated following the appearance of parasites, it could become anemic and die. Parasites feed on your pet's blood, where they can find the nutrients they need for survival.
- **Moult problem:** A reptile moults several times a year. The moult consists of a change of skin. The animal grows up and the scales become too tight on it. He develops new ones and the old ones have to leave. A moult problem occurs when the degree of humidity is not adequate. If your pet has difficulty moulting, do not pull on the moult. Give it a bath of lukewarm water instead.
- **Cloacal Prolapse:** A cloacal prolapse is an externalization of part of the digestive system of your reptile. It is therefore possible to see part of the intestine of your reptile out its cloaca (opening that connects the anus and the reproductive system).

As with all animals, it is recommended that an examination be conducted after the purchase of a new reptile and an annual check is required. The annual exam helps prevent health problems that may occur and thus save the life of your pet. If in doubt, a visit to the veterinarian is required! A reptile, whatever it is, will hide its symptoms so as not to become an easy prey for predators (humans). At the slightest change in behavior, contact your veterinarian.

