

Water Dragon (*Physignathus*)

General Information

Water Dragons can be found in parts of Asia and the Indo-Australian archipelago. Males typically reach three feet in length but females are usually somewhat smaller. In the wild they live in trees and bushes that often overhang areas of water such as pools and streams.

Brief overview of needs

Water Dragons can be kept together in a group setting, but the size of enclosure you would need to safely keep more than a couple of males, could be prohibitive. These

animals require a larger enclosure than you might at first imagine. You will need accommodation measuring at least six feet in length and correspondingly more if several animals are to be kept. Females can be aggressive towards other females, yet some will happily live



alongside others. When you have more than one of these lizards, you will definitely need to monitor them to make sure that all is well. Pay particular attention to their feeding and remember, that you will need more than one basking area if you are to avoid potentially aggressive situations. If there are problems with them living together, then you should first try increasing the size of the enclosure, or, if that doesn't work, separate enclosures may be the only way forward. Water dragons are naturally arboreal and will benefit from a suitably placed branch for climbing. It stands to reason that as tall an enclosure as possible is required to allow room for a branch or branches and also the necessary lighting equipment to be installed. However you

will still need to allow plenty of open space to accommodate the very necessary heavyweight water bowl. In this case, the water bowl should be as large as possible as water dragons like to immerse themselves. Ensure that you keep on top of the cleaning and changing of the water in the bowl! Also very important is the need for UVB light; **wide** spectrum, not just **full** spectrum! Temperatures should be around 28 – 35C. Make a thermal gradient in the enclosure (warmer at one end than at the other) and don't guess at what the temperature is, use a thermometer!

Water Dragons will thrive on a varied diet to include, crickets, mealworms, pinkies and occasionally, waxworms. Vegetable matter such as green beans and carrots, plus fruits including strawberries, raspberries and mango can be given.



Finally

To handle this type of lizard the whole animal should be gently grasped around the shoulder area and the other hand used to support the animal from below. Water Dragons are not too keen on being handled. They

have very sharp claws and may scratch and the tail is sometimes used to lash out at a potential threat. The tail is easily shed and should not be grasped if that can be avoided. Once the tail is shed though, a new tail will grow in time. It is a good idea to provide the Water Dragon with a safe and controlled environment every so often, so that it can explore and stretch its legs. Just keep a wary eye on it for attempting a disappearing act! The exercise will do it good.