

# Medium to Large Lizards

(That live in damp habitats

and are carnivorous)

e.g.

Water Dragons,

Basilisks

& Sailfins

## An Introductory Information Leaflet

in association with

**EURO REP**  
LIMITED

Europe's Premier  
Reptile Product Company

### Hot Spot

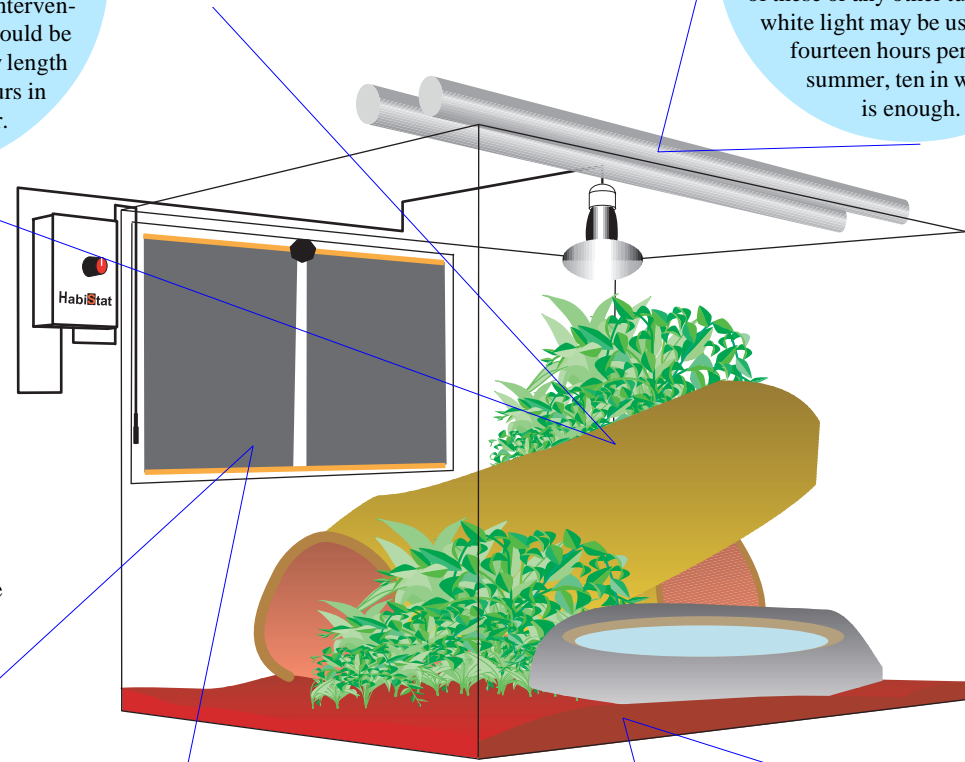
A local area of higher temperature may be created with an *Reptile Basking Spot lamp* or a small *Pearlco* ceramic. Use them in conjunction with a *HabiStat* thermostat for precise control. Protect the animals with an intervening wire mesh. Hot spots should be maintained for the same day length as the lights, fourteen hours in summer, ten in winter.

**Cleanliness and Hygiene:** A routine cleaner for all nonporous surfaces would be *Vetaclene*, followed by a thorough rinse. Any little graze or blemish on the animals themselves would benefit from the first aid afforded by dabbing the wound with *Vetadine*. As far as human hygiene is concerned, *Vetasept Surgical Scrub* will clean hands and surfaces while *Vetasept Hand Rub* will allow adequate cleansing and disinfection even in cases when water is unavailable.

### Ultra Violet Light.

A fluorescent tube that emits UV light is essential for healthy lizards. A tube like *Reptile D<sub>3</sub>* or *Activa* could be used as these emit white light as well. Conversely, a *Black Light* in conjunction with one of these or any other tube emitting white light may be used. About fourteen hours per day in summer, ten in winter is enough.

**Cage Decor:** Use Rain Forest Substrate as a base as it will stand up to the periodic spraying with water these lizards need. A large *Repti-rock* water dish could be used to provide a 'pond'. Cork bark tubes or Curio wood could be used to make an interesting three dimensional display. While draping *Repti-Vines* in the cage will provide refuges the lizards can hide in or move through to loosen shedding skin. *Repti-rock* caves would lend even more functionality and security.



### Background Heat

Use a heat mat between half and two thirds the size of the cage to provide background heating. The hottest spot in the cage should not be above 32°C while the coolest should not be below 24°C. Use a *HabiStat Mat - Stat* if the temperature is too hot but put the whole cage in a cooler place if the temperature is not cool enough.

### A Cage suitable for keeping Medium to Large Lizards that are associated with water

**Food:** Crickets, Locusts, Mealworms, and as a special treat Waxworms. Supplement livefoods by dusting insects with *Repton* or by feeding *Cricket Diet Plus*, *Mealworm Diet Plus* but not both. Water should be fresh and changed every day. These lizards may also eat a small amount of fresh sweet fruit and leafy salad.

### Cage Set Up

The cage should be set up to allow an active arboreal lizard plenty of scope to climb, bask in a hot spot and under UV light, move to a cooler spot and hunt for food. The lizards should also be able to secrete themselves into refuges and rub themselves against something when shedding their skin.

## Shopping List

Not every thing is needed to begin with, usually one item from each of the categories marked •. As a basic starting point the following essentials are considered the minimum needed:

Vivarium  
Heat Mat  
Basking Spot Lamp  
HabiStat Dimming Thermostats (Highly recommended)  
Rain Forest Substrate  
Repti-rock dish  
Thermometer  
Repti-Vine  
Piece of Cork Bark  
Reptile D<sub>3</sub> Lights  
Arcadia Control Units

After a while as your collection and experience grows other alternatives and extras can be used.

- **HabiStat, Heat Mats** (6x11/7w, 11x11/12w, 17x11/20w, 23x11/28w, 29x11/35w, 35x11/42w & 49x11/55w) & **Strips** (17x6/10w, 23x6/15w, 35x6/22w & 47x6/30w)
- **Basking Spot lamp** (60w, 100w, Normal, Daylight and Red Night types.)  
**Pearlco Bulb Ceramics** (60w, 100w, Reflectors & Holders)
- **Thermometers** (Alcohol, dial, minimum - maximum & digital electronic)
- **Hygrometers** (Dial & digital electronic)
- **HabiStat Thermostats** (Mat-Stat/100w, Temperature/300w, Twin/2x300w, Pulse Proportional/600w, Dimming/600w & Night Time Drop Function)
- **HabiStat Night Eye, Sun Switches & Moon Switches**
- **Repti-rock Dishes Hides & Caves**
- **Repti-Vines**
- **Rain Forest Substrate**
- **Cork Bark**
- **Curio Wood**
- **Reptile D<sub>3</sub> Lights** (18"/15w & 24"/18w)  
**Activa Professional Lights** (18"/15w & 24"/18w)  
or **Blacklights** (18"/15w & 24"/20w)  
**Arcadia Control Units** (15w, 2x15w, 18w, 2x18w, 20w & 2x20w)
- **Crickets** &/or **Locusts** &/or **Mealworms**  
**Waxworms**
- **Mealworm Diet Plus**
- **Cricket Diet Plus**
- **Repton**
- **Reptavite**
- **Reptasol**
- **ProBalance**
- **Vetaclean**
- **Vetadine**
- **Vetasept Surgical Scrub**
- **Vetasept Hand Rub**
- **Hand Spray**
- **Books & Leaflets**

## Semi-Aquatic Medium to Large Lizards...

### ...Biology

Basilisks, Sailfins and Water Dragons are typical of the medium to large lizards that live in association with water. They are usually green or brown in colour with a variety of other colours forming the bodily markings and pattern. The roughly 10 cm babies grow into adults that may be between 50 cms and 100 cms. In most cases the tail is over half the total length. They are animals of wet places, usually living at the water's edge.

### ...Housing

These lizards are best housed in a tall cages as they are naturally arboreal, that is they live in trees and bushes, often over hanging pools and streams. The longest measurement of their cage could be its height. Water Dragons are best housed in as large a cage as possible. Because of their rapid rate of growth and the heating and lighting equipment they need, purpose made vivaria are probably the most appropriate. The types with sliding glass doors to the front being especially resistant to escape. Another often used cage is a converted aquarium. A special adapting lid is used to contain the reptiles and house any equipment that may be used. Many other types of cage can be used to house these lizards.

As a guide, a minimum size, 90 cm x 60 cm x 45 cm would house a 45 cm lizard. The cage should be set up in a manner similar to the diagram over leaf. It will be necessary to provide a local hot spot near 40°C, while the coolest part of the cage should be nearer 28°C. The hot spot can easily be arranged by installing a *Basking Spot Lamp*. To ensure the cage does not overheat, the lamp is best controlled with a *HabiStat Dimming Thermostat*. White and UV light, from a lamp like a Reptile D<sub>3</sub> tube, may be needed and should be present for a similar period; about sixteen hours per day in summer dropping to eight in winter.

Much of the success achieved in keeping lizards will come from the skilful manipulation of ventilation. These lizards require highish humidity but cannot stand stagnant air conditions. Fresh air moving into the cage is essential. Use the upward draughts caused by warm air rising to flush out the cage and drag fresh air in. A light daily misting with a hand sprayer will provide the humidity required.

### ...Husbandry

Most may be kept singly or in groups. Of course the more lizards kept in each cage, the larger the cage should be. Each juvenile lizard will require about 30 cm x 30 cm x 60 cm of space but much more when they are adult. Males will tend to fight if more than one adult is present in the cage. Overall, the cage should be as large possible with plenty of hiding spaces and visual screens.

To handle this type of lizard the whole animal should be gently grasped around the shoulder region and the other hand used to support the animal from below. These animals do not really like being handled, so should only be touched if absolutely necessary. Sharp claws may scratch and the tail is sometimes used to 'whip' a potential threat. This same tail is easily shed and should not be grasped. Once shed, however, a new tail will grow in time. Some individuals may nip but this is rarely a serious matter if the lizard is small. Larger animals should be treated with caution until it is certain they are tame.

In time the cage will begin to look scruffy as faeces and debris builds up. As everything recommended for the cage is washable or disposable, a good clean out is easily done. Depending on the size of the animals and the density at which they are kept, eight to ten weeks would be about as long as the cage could be left before being completely cleaned. The cage set up advised in this leaflet is practicable and can be made to look pleasing to the eye. If a more natural set up is envisaged, it may be best to wait until some experience is gained. In any case, some of the very informative books on reptiles in general and lizards in particular could be investigated.

### ...Food & Feeding

Insects like crickets and locusts form the staple diet in captivity for small specimens. Mealworms can also be fed. Insects should be dusted with *Repton*, a vitamin and mineral supplement. Alternatively the insects can be 'loaded' by feeding *Crickets* and *Mealworm Diet Plus* but do not do both! Other insects that are eaten include Waxworms but these are best given only occasionally as a treat. Leafy salads and sweet fruit are sometimes eaten by a few individuals.

Live food is only eaten if it is seen to move and will usually be jumped upon and grabbed with the mouth. One lizard may eat up to five or more insects at one meal; it will depend upon their size.

Feed the lizards every other day with just enough to be completely eaten in fifteen minutes. Try not to leave an excess of uneaten insects in the cage. Once tame the lizards will accept moving morsels offered in tweezers or tongs. Here is a chance to use one of the excellent formulated diets like frozen sausages for reptiles or even thawed, frozen rodent pups.

A large water dish kept full of fresh water should always be available. The lizards will drink and will wish to bathe in fresh water from time to time. The water will need frequent changing as the animals will use their bath as a loo!

### ...Reproduction

Most male lizards are proportionately larger than the females and they have broader heads. Other differences in shape, form and colour exist but usually depend upon the precise species in detail.

A period of courtship proceeds mating and during this time much activity can be expected. Eggs are laid after mating and they may take several weeks to hatch. To grow to adult in captivity may take as short a time as twelve months but in the wild, two to five years may elapse. A cooler winter period may be needed to condition the lizards for breeding in the following season.

### ...Health & Disease

Lizards can live for several years in nature but as some will already be adult when purchased, no real estimate of life expectancy as pets can be made. They do not suffer from many diseases and veterinary attention is rarely needed. An environment and diet as described in this leaflet will preclude most problems. Good practice, hygiene and first aid will probably deal with rest. If real disease is discovered, a vet must of course, be consulted. Pet lizards do not pose a real threat to human health. All the normal hygiene precautions regarding humans and animals should, however, be observed.

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