



Collared Lizard *Crotaphytus collaris*

- Also known as the Eastern collared lizard, these lizards belong to the collared lizard family, and are indigenous to the scrublands, semi-arid deserts, and plains of southwestern to south central United States and northern Mexico.
- These active lizards are primarily diurnal and will bask frequently.
- Dorsal background color ranges from light turquoise blue, greenish blue, to grayish blue with numerous whitish flecks interspaced with pale yellow stripes or bands. Collared lizards derive their name from the black and white bands present on the nape, while the head is broad and reddish brown to brown in color.
- If provided the proper care, collared lizards can attain longevity of 5-10 years or more.

Size

Ranges from 2 ½ -4 inches as hatchlings and juveniles, and typically 8-16” as adults.

Housing

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling collared lizards can be housed in a 10-15 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adult collared lizards are active lizards that require a minimum of a 30-40 gallon long terrarium or enclosure. Both hatchling and adult collared lizards will thrive on a substrate of newspaper, play sand, reptile carpet, or paper towel. Avoid using reptile bark bedding or substrates that result in high humidity. For water, mist hatchlings and juveniles at least twice per day and adults at least 2-3 times weekly as well as their food. Collared lizards are a semi-arid species, and derive the majority of their moisture this way, although a shallow water dish can also be provided. Provide artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, or logs for ample basking and hiding opportunities.

For basking, create a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure with an appropriate sized under tank heating pad, ceramic, or radiant heat emitter. Ideal temperatures for bearded dragons range from 80-85 degrees F on the cool side and around 105-110 degrees F on the warm, basking side. Collared lizards do require overhead UVB incandescent and fluorescent lighting to thrive.

Spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least twice per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2-3 months.

Feeding/Diet

In the wild, collared lizards are primarily insectivorous. They will eat a variety of insects and other invertebrates, although they will also occasionally catch and consume smaller reptiles, and even newborn rodents.

Feed collared lizards in captivity appropriately sized feeder crickets, mealworms, roaches, superworms, and waxworms. Gut load these prey items by feeding them commercially available diets for added nutritional value. Collared lizards may also eat newborn pinky mice as well, but feed them these sparingly, if at all. As with other lizards, food can be given to collared lizards using a bowl or dish every 3-5 days. It is also important to provide calcium and vitamin D3 supplements in collared lizard diets whenever possible.

Handling

Collared lizards may initially be nervous and skittish lizards, but captive bred or born individuals or those that become handled regularly can become very docile and personable pets that provide an alternative to more common species. Handle your collard lizard gently and deliberately, but do not drop or injure the animal.

****Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens****