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Usambara Baboon Tarantula (*Pterinochilus murinus*)

Orange and Ornerly

Other common names for this species can include “Usambara orange baboon tarantula”, “orange baboon tarantula”, and oftentimes simply OBT or “Orange Bitey Thing” in the hobby and industry. The Usambara baboon tarantula is a somewhat small to medium sized tarantula species with currently four known color phases or variants. The abdomen, legs, and carapace are mostly the same color, and can range from brownish to reddish brown or orange-brown, brighter orange, to yellowish, yellowish brown, or yellowish-orange. The spider’s carapace typically has a star shaped marking, and the abdomen often has a fish bone or net like patterning. Usambara orange baboons, as with many tarantulas are nocturnal to crepuscular fossorial, or burrowing species, and like other tarantulas, will often act as ambush predators of insects, other invertebrates, and even small mammals or birds using silk threads to detect potentially approaching prey.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Subphylum: Chelicerata

Class: Arachnida

Order: Araneae

Infraorder: Mygalomorphae

Family: Theraphosidae

Subfamily: Harpactirinae

Genus: *Pterinochilus*

Species: *Pterinochilus murinus**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

Males of many tarantula species will often attain life spans of only 5 to 6 years. Females attain considerably longer life spans of 15 to 20 years or more in captivity.

Distribution and Habitat

The Usambara orange baboon tarantula is a relatively medium sized, terrestrial to fossorial species of Old World tarantula indigenous to a notable portion of sub-Saharan Africa. More specifically, this brightly colored and fast moving species occurs in Angola in western to southwestern Africa, but also ranges through central, southern, and eastern Africa as well from Kenya, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Mozambique, to South Africa and Malawi. Within this range, these vibrant orange tarantulas may be found in semi-arid deserts, savannahs, to scrublands, where they occupy self-excavated burrows, burrows constructed by other animals, and underneath vegetation, rocks, logs, and other ground debris.

Conservation Status

Not Evaluated for the IUCN Red List (NE) or otherwise Data Deficient (DD).

Legal and Regulatory Status (*Subject to Change)

Consult with your local, municipal, and state ordinances and regulations for any ownership restrictions.

Experience Level Required

Intermediate/Moderate to Advanced.

Size

Orange baboon tarantulas are medium-sized to large tarantulas reaching a total legspan of about 3 to 4 inches total leg span on average in males, and 4 to 6 inches total leg span on average for females.

Housing and Enclosure

Provide a sturdy, secure, and escape proof terrarium or enclosure 5 to 10 gallons long in size with a secure top for a single adult spider. Several of the acrylic displays and enclosures that are now manufactured for housing arachnids, insects, and other invertebrates can also be used. Spiderlings can be housed in an appropriately sized spiderling vial, plastic container or deli cup with adequate holes for ventilation. Acceptable substrate to use can include pesticide free potting soil, coconut fiber, vermiculite, or similar substrates 3 to 4 inches in depth. Decorations and/or other cage furnishings can also be included as well, although floor space is more important than height. This is a primarily terrestrial to burrowing species, but benefits from branches, horizontal cork bark, and plants for refuge. A fairly small, shallow water dish can also be provided, and should be cleaned regularly as well as regular misting for hydration.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Most species of tarantulas have simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it can be greatly beneficial for your tarantula's health, immune system, and overall wellness. Orange baboon tarantulas are a fairly hardy species that will tolerate ambient temperatures of as low as 65 degrees F. Typically, however, they may be kept at an ambient temperature of 78 to 82 degrees. Weekly and monthly regular misting will also help maintain humidity. Maintain at 65 to 70% humidity but the enclosure must have adequate ventilation and substrate be kept dry. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, or UTH (under tank heating element). More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous to Carnivorous; In the wild, orange baboon tarantulas are primarily insectivorous, meaning they eat insects and other invertebrates. They will also occasionally eat smaller vertebrates as well if they can catch and subdue them. In captivity, these tarantulas can be fed a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. This will promote optimal exoskeleton growth and development. Any uneaten food items should be cleaned and removed after a day or two. Their feeding frequency will depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed even invertebrates, as obesity and other health related issues can still become an issue with them. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

The Usambara orange baboons are well known for being a very defensive species that can also be fast moving. Although bites from this species are typically not serious or medically significant, they do deliver a painful and unpleasant bite with potentially potent venom and are not suitable spiders for beginners. Therefore, handling these species typically is not recommended. Orange baboons are better suited as a more advanced spider overall. In general, tarantulas are fragile animals, and accidentally dropping a spider can result in the rupture of its internal organs and/or exoskeleton, causing death to your tarantula. Although most tarantulas are not medically significant, with most being lesser than or just about equal to a bee sting, medical attention should still be sought from any apparent allergic reaction to a bite, or extreme irritation from urticating hairs from a pet tarantula, particularly the Orange baboon.

****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****

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility. MAHS cannot make any claims or guarantees regarding any information in this care sheet therein. This care sheet may be reprinted or redistributed only in its entirety, including any and all MAHS logos and disclaimers. Last updated on: 15 December 2018.

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