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Rankin's Dragon (*Pogona henrylawsoni*)

Mini-Dragons from Down Under!

Rankin's dragons are fairly small to medium sized spiny skinned and scaled agamid lizards indigenous to much of Australia. Rankin's dragons are emerging in popularity as a smaller alternative, and can be distinguished from the larger Inland or Central Bearded Dragon (*P. vitticeps*) by some differing scalation, distribution, and their smaller size. Bearded dragons are named for their loose flap of spiny skin and scales on the underside of the neck that can be voluntarily puffed out in defense or territorial display. They are tan, light sandy brown, reddish, to light grayish lizards in color with a rather short and broad head and paler light colored spots and soft spines along the back and sides. They also have prominent spines on the neck and jowls that will darken considerably when they are defensive, territorial, or otherwise agitated, giving them their name of bearded dragon.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Suborder: Lacertilia

Infraorder: Iguania

Family: Agamidae

Subfamily: Amphibolurinae

Genus: *Pogona*

Species: *Pogona henrylawsoni**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, Rankin's dragons can attain longevity of 10 to 15 years or more.

Distribution and Habitat

The Rankin's bearded dragon has a relatively smaller distribution over northeastern Australia than does the Central, or Inland bearded dragon (*P. vitticeps*), where this species is primarily indigenous to Queensland. Within this range, they may occupy a wide variety of habitats and environments, including arid to semi-arid deserts, scrublands, grasslands, to dry open forests and

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woodlands. They are also often semi-arboreal, being found in low branches of trees, shrubs, and other vegetation, rocks, and other natural or manmade structures.

Conservation Status

IUCN Red List Least Concern (LC).

Legal and Regulatory Status(*Subject to Change)

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

Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner.

Size

Rankin's dragons range from 3 ½ to 5 inches as hatchlings and juveniles, and about 10 to 12 inches on average as adults.

Housing and Enclosure

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling Rankin's dragons can be housed in a 15 to 20 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adult Rankin's dragons require a minimum of a 20 gallon long terrarium or enclosure. Hatchling and adult Rankin's dragons can be maintained on a substrate of cage carpet or terrarium liner, or ground walnut shell substrates. Avoid using substrates made from reptile bark that result in environments that are too humid. Provide a small dish of clean water, and change and clean it every several days, or sooner if fouled. Soaking them at least once weekly in lukewarm water for 15 to 20 minutes can also help raise their hydration. Provide ample basking and hiding opportunities by providing artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, or logs.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

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 Rankin's dragons range from 80 to 85 degrees F on the cool side and around 100 to 112 degrees F on the warm, basking side. Providing the correct amounts of UVA/UVB overhead incandescent and florescent lighting, and calcium-to-phosphorus ratios is essential for ensuring the health and overall well-being of Rankin's dragons in captivity. Without UVA/UVB, or adequate amounts of it, they can be susceptible to the abnormal bone growth and development known as Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD), and other health and development maladies. Also be sure to 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 to 3 months. 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

Omnivorous; In the wild, Rankin's dragons are omnivorous, meaning they will eat both plant and animal matter. They will eat a variety of insects and other invertebrates, as well as fruit and vegetable matter. In captivity, feed Rankin's dragons mostly a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. They can also be given a mixed assortment of chopped up vegetables including carrots, peas, collard, mustard, and dandelion greens, and beans. Several commercially available omnivore mix diets are also available. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. Rankin's dragons also require additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation 1 to 2 times

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weekly or as otherwise directed for optimal health and development. This is in order to prevent Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD) and other growth and nutritional deficiencies. Their feeding frequency will depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed them, as obesity and other health related issues can become an issue. 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

As with many reptiles, hatchling and juvenile Rankin's dragons typically tend to be initially more nervous and defensive. Handle your Rankin's dragon gently and deliberately, but do not drop or injure the animal. Most adult Rankin's dragons will settle down considerably and become quite docile and personable pets to keep.

****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: 16 December 2018.

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