



## Spanish, or Iberian Ribbed Newt (*Pleurodeles waltl*)

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### **A Unique Ribbed Defense**

The Spanish, or Iberian ribbed newts are a largely aquatic species of newts which can range in color from grayish to grayish brown in color with heavy darker mottling or blotches. The head is fairly large and flattened, skin is granular, and it has pronounced tubercles giving this species its common name. As a defense mechanism, these newts have tubercles which can be extended and puncture through their skin with little to no harm to the newt. This is believed to be a primitive system of envenomation, although these newts are harmless to humans.

### **Taxonomy**

**Life:** All living, physical, and animate entities

**Domain:** Eukaryota

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum/Sub Phylum:** Chordata/Vertebrata

**Class:** Amphibia

**Order:** Caudata/Urodela

**Suborder:** Salamandroidea

**Family:** Salamandridae

**Genus:** *Pleurodeles*

**Species:** *Pleurodeles waltl*\*

*\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

### **Lifespan and Longevity**

If provided the proper care, Spanish ribbed newts can attain longevity of 5 to 10 years or more.

### **Distribution and Habitat**

Ribbed newts are indigenous to the ponds, streams, and seasonally flooded wetlands of the somewhat arid regions of the Iberian Peninsula region of Europe (including Spain and Portugal).

### **Conservation Status**

IUCN Red List Near Threatened (NT).

### **Experience Level Required**

Intermediate/Moderate.

### **Size**

Iberian ribbed newts are a large species of newt that range up to 8 to 12 inches.

<http://www.madisonherps.org>

### **Housing and Enclosure**

Iberian ribbed newts are almost entirely aquatic and require the appropriate aquatic setup. Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A 30 to 40 gallon aquarium, terrarium, or other enclosure is suitable for these newts. They can also be kept communally in proportionally larger housing. The enclosure should consist of a primarily aquatic setup with a floating platform or other dry area these newts can resort to on a sand or gravel substrate. An appropriate filter can be used to help maintain water clarity and cleanliness. Also provide ample hiding opportunities in the aquarium using live plants and rocks. Enclosures should be spot cleaned, sterilized, and water cleaned and changed regularly every 1 to 2 weeks.

### **Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity**

Ribbed newts have simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it in moderated amounts can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. These newts otherwise do not require any other special lighting or heating unless live plants are also maintained, although water temperatures should be maintained at around 60 to 75 degrees F. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, submersible water heater, or UTH (under tank heating element). They are susceptible to health and husbandry related issues if water temperatures are too cold or too warm for these unusual amphibians. 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*; Iberian ribbed newts are largely opportunistic feeders in the wild, feeding on small fish, a wide range of invertebrates, and carrion. Food items that are readily accepted by these amphibians can include earthworms, mealworms, waxworms, bloodworms, small feeder crickets and roaches, silkworms, or other feeder insects as well as some commercially available diets. Recommended feeding is two to three times weekly. Feeder insects should also be gut loaded and/or dusted with additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplements as well prior to feeding to ensure optimal nutrition and health. 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 most amphibians, Iberian ribbed newts are fragile animals, and handling should be done carefully or avoided and kept to a minimum whenever possible. While these newts can eject their lateral tubercles in defense, these spined ribs are not toxic or otherwise overly dangerous to humans. Ideally, an aquarium net of appropriate size can be used to move aquatic caudates whenever necessary.

\*\*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](mailto:info@madisonherps.org)

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