



# Water Dragon

*Physignathus cocincinu*

## Care Sheet

**Caging Needed:** They are arboreal lizards, meaning they climb and like to be up high. An ideal enclosure for a water dragon should have more height than length, at least 4ft by 3ft at the base. The larger the enclosure the better since too small of an enclosure can cause the water dragon to rub its scout until a bacterial infection occurs.

**Bedding & Water Needs:** Coconut fiber substrate, moistened, can be used as a substrate. Water dragons enjoy swimming and soaking in water. Provide a large pan that's deep enough to allow soaking (hatchlings do fine with a shallow pan). Change the water frequently to maintain cleanliness. If you choose to build an elaborate naturalistic vivarium complete with a pool for your water dragons, consider using some type of aquarium filter in the water area.

**Temperature & Humidity:** Temperatures should be kept at 75-80 degrees during the day with a basking temperature of 84-88 degrees. Nighttime temperatures should be kept at 75- 80 degrees. It's a good idea to have at least two thermometers in the cage, one in the cool side and one in the warm side of the enclosure. Improper temperature ranges can lead to a water dragon with a weakened immune system and inadequate digestion of nutrients due to slower metabolism. Water dragons enjoy a humid environment, so maintain cage humidity at close to 80 percent.

**Lighting & Heat:** Water dragons need UVA and UVB lighting for proper vitamin absorption.

**Diet:** Water Dragons are omnivorous; which means they eat both meat and vegetables. About 10%-15% of an adult's diet should be made up of plant matter, the remaining percentage being protein (insects). Dark leafy vegetables like collard and mustard greens, kale and red tip leaf lettuce are good for a dragon, as are clover, parsley, and broccoli, green beans, peas, squash, grated carrots and sweet potatoes. Spinach and iceberg lettuce should never be fed. Fruits such as figs, kiwi, apples, raspberries, strawberries and melons can also be fed, but should not be given as often. Remember to wash vegetables thoroughly, then cut or shred to make it easier to ingest. Remove any uneaten vegetables before turning the lights off at night. Protein sources such as: gut-loaded crickets, mealworms, cockroaches, and wax worms dusted with a supplement should also be part of the diet. Wild caught insects should never be fed, since they can carry disease.

**Average Size:** 3-4 ft including tail

**Life Span:** up to 18 years

