

## **Water Dragon**

Scientific Name: *Physignathus cocincinus*

Native to: Southeast Asia

Maximum Length: 36 inches

Life Span: 10 - 15 years

### **Characteristics:**

The Chinese water dragon is a lizard native to China and Southeast Asia. This green lizard generally has stark white markings along the lower jaw and dark lines running in bands along the tail. They normally have large spines running along the crest of their head, spine and tail. 2/3 to 1/2 of the length of the animal will be tail.

They are most frequently found in the forest near creeks, rivers, lakes or other water bodies with basking areas. They are active in the day time, spending most of their time in trees or plants when not hunting. The dragon can be very quick when threatened and is able to both dive and swim in water when attempting to evade predators.

### **Care tips:**

**Enclosure:** A minimum of a 40-gallon tank is needed for adult water dragons. Some water dragons may rub their noses against the glass of the habitat, causing injury. A background can be placed around the sides and at the bottom of the habitat to discourage them from doing this.

**Substrate:** Use mulch adjacent substrates such as coconut fiber or Repti-bark. Adding a soil or moss mix into the tank would be good as well.

**Habitat:** Provide multiple branches and vines throughout the cage so that your water dragon can climb up and bask under the heat light. Maintain 60 – 80% humidity level by misting the cage everyday as needed.

**Temperature and Lighting:** UVB lighting with full spectrum rays are required for your water dragon 10 – 12 hours a day. An incandescent day bulb may be used for the basking area during daylight hours only. Water dragons need a temperature gradient of 95°F for the warm basking end, and 70°F for the cool end. All lights should be turned off at night so they can have a proper day to night cycle. A ceramic heater can be used at all hours as the nighttime temperature shouldn't go below 80°F.

**Food and Water:** Water dragons need fresh chlorine free water available to them at all times. They are an omnivorous animal meaning they eat both vegetation and meat. Feed them daily with crickets that have been sprinkled with a calcium supplement. You can sprinkle them with a multi vitamin supplement once or twice a week. Every once in a while, as a treat you can provide them with waxworms, dubai roaches, or mealworms. The grubs and worms tend to be quite fatty so we normally offer these a maximum of once or twice a week. Mealworms and roaches can be hard to digest so only provide these to mature dragons (18 months or older) once or twice a week.