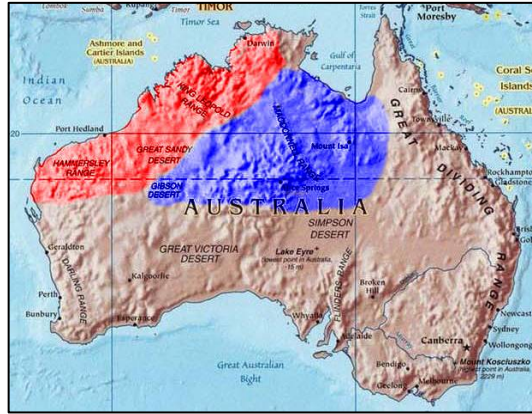


Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

Spiny or Ridge-Tail Monitor (*Varanus acanthurus*)

General Information

Spiny-Tail monitors are found throughout Western Australia, Northern Territory, and parts of Queensland. There are two types of spiny-tailed monitors usually available in the pet trade and they are *V. acanthurus acanthurus* and *V. acanthurus brachyurus*. These lizards have a number of common names but the most popular is "Ackies". *V. acanthurus acanthurus* is known as the red ackie and *V. acanthurus brachyurus* is known as the yellow ackie. The red ackie is the larger of the two forms, usually has a longer tail, and is reddish brown in color. The yellow ackie is slightly smaller and is yellowish brown in color. Adult ackies can grow over 30 inches in total length, however, most specimens are much smaller. Ackies are found in dry areas of Australia and are usually near rocky outcroppings. When frightened, Ackies will retreat into rock crevices and puff up their bodies to wedge themselves in-between the rocks. Ackies can be housed separately or in groups and ideally you should start with young, immature animals. Breeding ackies isn't difficult and you will be most successful if you keep them in a group. Females will produce multiple clutches a year, with 7-12 eggs in each clutch. The eggs need to be incubated at 84-85 degrees and they will hatch between 85-105 days.



Temperature and UV Lighting

Ackies should be maintained between 90-105 degrees with a basking spot of 150 degrees. Make sure that your lizard also has a cool area available that ranges in the **low 80's**. At night the temperature can drop to 70 degrees. Hours of daylight should be 12L/12D during a 24 hour period. Ackies also need to be exposed to UVB light during the daylight hours. This light enables the lizard to produce vitamin D3. The vitamin D produced by UVB metabolizes the calcium in the lizards' diet. In general it's what makes an ackies bones hard and without it they usually die. This process of inadequate UVB and calcium is called Metabolic Bone Disease. Also it is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB. If you're not sure if your UV light is still producing UVB, bring it in and we'll be happy to test the light for you.

Housing

Baby ackies can be kept in a 29 gallon cage, and a group consisting of 2-4 animals can be housed in a 60 gallon or larger terrarium.

Bedding

Different beddings have positives and negatives when used for reptiles. The best type of bedding for ackies would be some type of fine sand. Certain types of sand can cause impactions in the intestine and kill baby ackies. We feel that these types of impactions are rare and we have never personally encountered this problem.

Calcium

Ackies also require a calcium and vitamin supplement. This supplement works with the UVB light allowing the lizard to receive the proper amounts of calcium and vitamins. This should be used every day as babies and reduced to 1-2 times a week as adults. Calcium is sold in a powder form and is sprinkled on the crickets and other insects that you feed your lizard. You should apply a very light coating to the food items, being careful not to waste any excess powder.

Food

Ackies monitors are opportunistic hunters and are known to eat almost anything they can fit into their mouth. Ideal foods are; pinkie mice, crickets, superworms, mealworms, and waxworms. A mixed diet of these food items four to five times per week will ensure proper growth and health.

Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary. Any fecal matter or left over food should be cleaned out several times a week. The bedding should be completely changed once a month and fresh clean water should be provided at all times. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner, we recommend Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat. Ackies can be handled on a daily basis and usually tame down quite well. Always wash your hands before and after handling them.

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Prehistoric Pets Inc. (909) 465-6085

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