

Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

Rhinoceros Iguanas

(*Cyclura cornuta*)

General Information

Rhinoceros iguanas are found on a few islands in the Caribbean. The iguanas that belong to this genus are among the most endangered lizards in the world. Male iguanas can reach an adult size of four feet and weigh over 20 pounds. Iguanas are difficult to sex as babies but mature males can be distinguished by their larger heads and jowls. The easiest way to sex adult Iguanas is the presence of enlarged femoral pores. These pores are located on the underside of the back legs, male iguanas' pores are noticeably larger. Male iguanas are aggressive towards each other and should be housed separately. Rhinoceros iguanas are very long lived and one can expect their pet to live 20-40 years if properly cared for. Prehistoric Pets promotes responsible reptile ownership and we recommend locking cages that prevent accidental escape. Large iguanas and other escaped reptiles can have a negative impact on the general public which can lead to a ban of reptile ownership.



Temperature and UV Lighting

Rhinoceros iguanas should be maintained at a daytime temperature of 85-90 degrees, with a basking spot reaching up to 95 degrees. Night time temperatures should be maintained between 70 -75 degrees. If your home is cooler than these temperatures at night you will need a red or other dark heat light to be used at night. Iguanas come from a fairly humid environment and ideally you should mist the cage a few times a week. Rhinoceros iguanas require 10-14 hours of UVB light a day. This light enables the iguana to produce vitamin D3. The vitamin D produced by UVB metabolizes the calcium in the lizards' diet. In general it's what makes iguanas' 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.

Calcium

Rhinoceros iguanas 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 vegetables that you feed your Iguana. You should apply a very light coating to the food items, being careful not to waste any excess powder.

Bedding

Our recommendation for bedding is moist play sand and rocks.

Food and Water

Rhinoceros iguanas are herbivores and their diet should consist of green leafy vegetables. The following vegetables should make up 80 percent of an iguana's diet: Collard greens, mustard greens, red leaf lettuce, green leaf lettuce, romaine lettuce, dandelion greens, hibiscus leaves and flowers, green onions, spinach, green beans, zucchini, and frozen mixed vegetables. Fruits should make up the remaining 20% of an iguanas diet. Examples of ideal fruits are: Apples, bananas, strawberries, figs, peaches, mango, papaya, cantaloupe, grapes, blackberries, and blueberries. Iguanas also can be fed dry pellet foods as a supplement to the diet stated above. Fresh clean water should be available at all times.

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. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner. We recommend Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat. We recommend that you handle your iguana a few times each day for up to a half an hour. This repeated handling will help your new pet get comfortable with you and its new surroundings. You can handle your iguana for longer periods of time once it has become more accustomed to you and its new habitat. Remember, never pick up your iguana by the tail, it can break off.

www.reptileguru.com

Prehistoric Pets Inc. (909) 465-6085

"Maps courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries."