



Water dragon

(Green water dragons, Chinese water dragons)

Physignathus cocincinus

Adult Size	Males up to 3 feet, females smaller.	Life Span	10 plus years.
Male/Female Differences	Male adult water dragons are crested and have large heads and jowls. The neck on the male is darker colored. Females have larger femoral pores and are smaller.		
Compatibility	Keep in groups of one male up to four females. Large rooms can accommodate more groups.		
Origin	China, Thailand, into the Indo-Australian archipelago.		
Climate	Warm tropical trees near water.		
Day Cycle	Diurnal - active during the day.		
Temperature	Mid 80's during the day, slightly cooler at night. Provide higher heat – up to 90 degrees – above a basking spot.		
Lighting	Provide UVB lighting for 8-12 hours per day to help utilize calcium, vitamin B, and vitamin D.		
Humidity	Water dragons prefer 70-80 percent humidity. This can be maintained with daily misting, a waterfall, a large water dish, or automatic misting systems.		
Habitat/Territory	These lizards spend their time on branches up in trees.		
Substrate/Bedding	Reptile bark and shredded coconut fibers make ideal bedding in that they help hold humidity. Soil mixtures, although they can get dirty, can be planted with live plants. Reptile carpet can be used as it is easy to disinfect and prevents parasites.		

Hiding Place/Den	Plenty of live or artificial plants and vines provide places for the animal to climb and hide.
Cage Type	The cage should be a minimum of twice the length of the animal – a 15 inch lizard needs at least an aquarium measuring 30 inches. Glass aquariums with screen lids are great homes as they help hold humidity. Larger and multiple animals can be housed in custom made enclosures. These active animals really need room to run and climb to prevent atrophy of the leg muscles, so provide as much space as possible.
Diet	Offer variety to these lizards. They are omnivores, so feed properly gut loaded crickets with an occasional waxworm or superworm. Larger water dragons can also be offered an occasional pinkie or fuzzie. Offer fresh vegetables, such as dark leafy greens and squashes, and fresh fruits, such as apples, bananas, strawberries, and melons. Continue to offer vegetables and fruits even if ignored the first few times.
Supplements	Feed crickets a proper diet to ensure adequate nutrition for you dragon. Dust crickets with small amounts of vitamin/calcium powder; lizards fed a properly balanced diet should need supplementation every week or two, but tiny amounts can be used every feeding.
Diet Precautions	Dietary imbalances and a type of gout can be caused by feeding a limited diet. Avoid over supplementing , especially with too much phosphorus. Do not feed too much fruit as this can cause diarrhea.
Feeding	Feed juveniles small crickets dusted with vitamin supplements every two days. Adult water dragons should be fed every three to four days. Offer smaller items, about one third of the animal’s head, instead of one large item.
Water Source	Provide fresh water daily. A large water dish will allow the dragon to soak and will help keep the humidity high.
Grooming	Proper humidity ensures proper shedding of skin – but too high can cause bacterial infections in the skin and mouth. Soaking daily in a large, tall sided container of water will benefit their skin and provide some much needed exercise.
Oral and Foot Care	Mouth rot from too much moisture. Toes can get caught on loose threads from the cage carpet. Providing climbing branches helps keep these lizard’s nails trimmed; they can also be trimmed by an experienced vet or here at Wilmette pet. Limbs can become atrophied if they are not given enough exercise.

Proper Handling	While water dragons do not enjoy a lot of handling, they are calm and relaxed in the hand for short periods. Keep nails trimmed to avoid scratches, and always wash hands after handling any reptile or amphibians. Use care when handling as their tail can break off.
Habitat Maintenance	Spot clean cage and replace water daily. Replace substrate when dirty, every few weeks.
Health Concerns	Bacterial infections can result from excessively high humidity and unsanitary conditions. Metabolic bone disease can result from improper diet, poor lighting, and lack of supplements. Water dragons can also suffer from internal and external parasites and atrophied leg muscles.
