

Collared Lizard

Size: 12 - 14 inches (with tail)

Weight: About 40 grams

Markings: Brightly colored base with spots and cream colored belly. Markings vary

greatly between subspecies with males always being more colorful than females.

Although Archie may appear dull colored, he's actually bright aqua with dark green and white spots. At times he has a few yellow spots on his back too. Oh yea, his eyes are brown

Food Requirements: Depending on activity level, 8 - 12 medium sized crickets everyday or one small pinky mouse every 5 - 7 days.

Temperament: Captive bred specimens tend to be less aggressive toward humans, but may bite at first. Frequent handling when young is important, and most will soon

become very tame. Archie will sit on my shoulder or follow me around my room. As for

temperament between Collareds, males should never be kept together, but females get along just fine.

Good combinations: one male and up to 2 females, all females, or one male.

Activity Level: Very active during the morning and early afternoon. Frequent activities

include: observing movement around cage, hunting for bugs, digging, admiring self

in reflection, and constantly changing location to maintain the perfect body temperature.

Wild caught Collared do poorly in captivity because they are not accustomed to glass.

They don't understand why there is a whole other cage with another lizard in it they can't

get to. (The reflection) They will spend every waking hour trying to get out.

Archie was captive bred and soon gave up this habit once he settled into his new

surroundings. Now he only does this for attention.

One of the most important things to consider before getting a collared lizard is budget. They require fairly large cages, 60 gallon and up, which can cost a lot.

One way to save money is to build your own cage if you're good at that sort of thing.

Before building a cage remember that it should be as attractive as possible. After all, you wouldn't want a beautiful lizard in a trashy cage.

The larger cages require more lights and more heating apparatuses. You will need more substrate and decorations too.

In the wild, Collareds roam large open areas, jumping from rock to rock. They are not good climbers so don't bother getting a cage that is tall. Any cage taller than 18 inches is a waist. Length and width are important though. Archie lives in a 36 X 18 X 18 , 60 gallon tank. This tank could easily house up to 3 lizards.

When it comes to decorating, keep it simple. Try to avoid cluttering the cage. At least 60% of the cage floor should be open space. DO NOT USE round rocks unless you want a pancake lizard. It would be very unfortunate if your lizard tried to climb up onto a rock and it rolled over on him. Also avoid any unstable decorations that could pose a hazard if they fell or collapsed.

When you arrange the lights and heating devices, keep in mind that there should be a hot end and a cooler end in the cage. The hot end should be 85-90 F and the cooler end should be 70-80 F at one end there should be a basking rock with a heat lamp over it. The temperature under the basking light should be about 120 F. Next to the basking light is the UV light. The UV light should be as close to the basking point as possible because this is where your lizard will spend most of its time.

Most larger tanks, 30 gallons and up, require some sort of under tank heating system to keep the temperature up in the 90's. Any under tank heating system that is designed specifically for this tank will do. Depending on the ambient temperature of the room the tank is in, this may not be necessary.

At night, the temperature should drop to about 70-75 F. If you turn off all the lighting and leave on the under tank heater the temperature should remain in the safe zone. Do not leave on any lights at night for heating because your lizard will not be able to sleep.

The last thing to remember about heating is not to "smother" the cage. It is best

to have a cage with at least half of the top open for ventilation. If this drops the temperature too much, then you don't have enough heating power.

The most important type of lighting for Collared Lizards is Ultra Violet. This type of light is essential for proper calcium absorption and other nutritional needs. It is not necessary to buy a UV light that runs the entire length of the cage. An 18 inch light can cost as much as \$30 and anything larger than that can cost up to \$80! To make sure enough UV rays are absorbed, place the UV light near the basking light. Collareds only bask in the wild at the hottest parts of the day and don't require UV rays all day long. If you left the UV light on 10 hours a day, it would need to be replaced every 4-5 months. Archie's UV light is on a timer that automatically turns it on at 11 am and off at 4 pm This extends it's life to about 1 year.

The next type of lighting you will need to provide is a basking lamp. Normal light bulbs have no reflective shielding, so all the heat goes up instead of down into the cage. Lamps with a reflective backing will solve this problem. Rather than buying an expensive "Reptile Light", a simple outdoor flood lamp will do the exact same thing for a lot less money. A 75 watt flood lamp, 18 inches from the ground will provide proper basking temperatures.

If the basking lamp does not light up the cage enough, another low-wattage light bulb or fluorescent tube can be used. All lights should be kept out of reach of your lizard.

Almost any invertebrate smaller than the size of your lizards head will be readily accepted. All food should be fortified with calcium and vitamins before serving to insure a balanced diet.

While it is possible to keep a reptile alive on one kind of food, remember that variety is the spice of life. Imagine if you only ever got to eat one thing. The best way to provide a good variety is to catch insects from outside if possible.

The health of the food you feed your pet is just as important as anything else. I keep my crickets in an old leaky 10 gallon aquarium with peat moss in the bottom. I feed them a constant supply of tropical fish food to make them nice and

plump.

For moisture, I leave a damp piece of clean toilet paper on a plate in their cage.

These things need to be kept clean at all times. You'll know when to clean up because if you don't there will be a horrible stench.

The last thing to remember about feeding Collared Lizards is that they will only eat

as much as they need. It will take some experimentation to find out exactly how much

you should give your lizard at a time. I feed Archie in the morning because in the wild

Collard Lizards hunt for food as soon as they warm up, then spend the rest of the day basking in the sun.