



ANIMAL CARE SHEET



Flap Jack Chameleon

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Reptilia
Order:	Squamata
Family:	Chamaeleonidae
Genus:	Chamaeleo
Size:	Length: up to 38 cm
Name in English:	Flap-Neck Chameleon
Name in Afrikaans:	Trapsuukie
Scientific Name:	Chamaeleo Dilepis

General

The flap-necked chameleon's common name derives from the large, movable flaps that protrude from either side of the upper surface of its neck. Normally these flaps lie flat, over a bony protuberance at the back of the head called a "casque", but during threat displays to deter rivals or predators, they can be raised and angled at 90 degrees to the head. Males can be distinguished from females by their taller casques, larger flaps and by the small spurs which protrude from the hind legs of some subspecies. At rest, the flap-necked chameleon's body colouration is usually light green, brown or yellow, with a light or dark stripe extending across the flanks. The flap-necked chameleon's body is diffusely marked with numerous dark spots, which become bright yellow or orange when it is excited or ready to mate. Two low crests formed from large conical scales run down the centre of the upper and lower surfaces of the body, with the lower crest beginning at the throat and continuing unbroken over the belly.

Flap-Necked Chameleons come from Tanzania. This species is arboreal (a tree dweller) inhabiting the tropical rain forests and savannas. Males can become territorial, separate from other males. Usually tame but frequent handling will stress the animal.

Range

One of the most widely distributed chameleon species, the flap-necked chameleon is found throughout almost all of southern and central Africa, with the northern limits of its range extending from Nigeria and Cameroon in the west to Somalia and Ethiopia in the east

Habitat

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A chameleon will require at least a 29-gallon high aquarium. When adult they require an enclosure around 2' X 2' X 3' in size. Suitable substrates for your chameleon's home include reptile carpet or reptile

Captive

bark. Chameleons should be provided with several climbing branches real or artificial plants and climbing vines, real or artificial.

Environment

Full-Spectrum lighting that emits UVB is a must for captive reptiles. Reptiles depend on ultra-violet light to synthesize vitamin D3, which regulates calcium absorption in the intestine. The light should be positioned less than 18" from your pet for maximum effect. Glass blocks ultraviolet light, and air circulation, therefore it should never be used as a top for the enclosure. A 12- hour day/ night lighting cycle is a good start for your pet reptile. Using a timer is the best way to ensure that the proper amount of light is received.

Temperatures should be kept at about 78-85 degrees F with low to moderate humidity. There are several methods for establishing the proper temperature range for your reptile. Using spotlights of variable wattage incandescent bulbs on the outside of the enclosure, and under tank heaters or any combination of these. When using spotlights for 24 hour heat use red, night bulbs or a ceramic heating element to maintain day / night light cycle. Never place lights inside the enclosure where the reptile could come in contact with them and get burned. Use a thermometer to ensure proper temperature range is maintained.

Food:

Flap neck chameleons are carnivores. Their primary diet consists of insects like crickets and mealworms. DO NOT LEAVE THE CRICKETS IN THE CAGE FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME. You should dust your chameleon's food with a vitamin/ mineral supplement.

Chameleons usually will not drink from standing water; therefore a water bowl is not necessary. Misting of the vines and leaves every 3-4 days is recommended. You should also provide a water dripper with a catch basin for a constant water source.

Biology

Usually found amongst the branches of trees and bushes, the flap-necked chameleon will occasionally descend to the ground in order to seek out new feeding grounds or a mate. Like other chameleon species, the flap-necked chameleon has a number of special adaptations for hunting. Its eyes are located on cone-shaped turrets, which can move independently, allowing it to look in two different directions simultaneously, while searching for its insect prey. Once spotted, prey is caught by means of the flap-necked chameleon's remarkable, extensile tongue. The contraction of special muscles within the tongue rapidly propels it towards the prey, which is snared by a combination of the tongue's sticky mucous coating and a vacuum created by muscles in the tip.

When threatened, the flap-necked chameleon presents a dramatic display, rocking from side-to-side, while raising its neck flaps, expanding its throat pouch and gaping its mouth. Female flap-necked chameleons are larger than the males and outcompete them for the most favourable areas within their habitat, where prey is most abundant. The short mating season is the only time when females will allow males to approach them without conflict. After mating, the female once again becomes aggressive to males, turning black and butting heads with any that approach. After a gestation period of around one month, the female digs a hole in which the eggs are buried. While clutch sizes of up to 60 eggs have been recorded in captivity, in the wild, clutch size may be significantly smaller. Hatching takes place around 9 months later, with the young reaching sexual maturity after 9 to 12 months

Threats

The flap-necked chameleon is one of the most extensively exported chameleon species with almost 50,000 individuals exported between 1977 and 2001. The greatest demand for these chameleons comes from the U.S.A. pet trade

Conservation

The flap-necked chameleon is listed on Appendix II of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and any international trade in this species is therefore strictly controlled and regulated by annual maximum export quotas. Despite its popularity in the pet trade, at the present time this species appears to be widespread and common. Nevertheless, without proper monitoring of the

effects of harvesting for the pet trade, the flap-necked chameleon's population is at risk of undergoing a significant, but undetected, population decline