

Diet

The collared lizard is a carnivorous lizard that feeds largely on insects and smaller lizards. Some collared lizards are known to eat greens as a portion of their diets, but greens should not be the majority of the diet for any collared lizard. Feed both juvenile and adult collared lizards daily due to their active nature and high metabolism. For adults, the main food sources include either 6-week old crickets or 0.75-inch (2cm) dubia roach nymphs. Other options include superworms, mealworms, waxworms, horned worms, grasshoppers, locusts, the very occasional pinky mouse, and greens. For juveniles, the main food sources include 4-week old crickets or 0.5-inch (1.2cm) dubia roach nymphs. Other options include small mealworms and diced greens. For hatchlings, the main food sources include pinhead crickets or 0.25-inch (0.6cm) dubia roaches. Do not offer any food item that is too large. The rule of thumb is that food items should be no larger than the width between your collared lizard's eyes.

Water

Collared lizards require a clean source of water at all times. A water dish is a staple requirement for all collared lizard enclosures. Other options include dripper systems or pouring water into the enclosure on rocks or in front of the lizard to stimulate drinking. Also, using syringes to hand administer water to maintain hydration is an option.

Supplements

Collared lizards should receive calcium supplementation 2-3 times weekly by dusting food items. Talk to your veterinarian for information on the most appropriate types of supplementation for your lizard.

Tips for a Happy, Healthy Animal

- Have any newly acquired collared lizard be seen by an experienced reptile veterinarian for a wellness examination and fecal examination for intestinal parasites.
- Have an adequate quarantine area for new arrivals and quarantine for at least 4 weeks.
- House collared lizards in adequate enclosure sizes.
- Change UVB lighting every 6-12 months for proper UVB exposure.
- Provide multiple branches, rocks, and safe furniture for climbing and enrichment.
- Routine enclosure cleaning and disinfecting of branches, rocks, and furniture is recommended.
- Limit access and visibility to other pets and reptiles in your house to help reduce stress.

It Is Important to Avoid

- Having more than one adult male in the same enclosure.
- Heavy rocks or objects that can be moved in the enclosure and cause injury to your lizard.
- Temperatures higher or lower than the recommended temperatures.
- Unsupervised roaming outside the enclosure.
- Exposure to other animals.
- Exposure to non-food items that can fit inside their mouths.
- Dirty water dishes and enclosures.
- Feeding food sources larger than the width between the eyes.
- Handling multiple animals without washing your hands.

Common Disorders

- Nutritional Secondary Hyperparathyroidism (NSHP) or Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD)
- Respiratory Diseases
- Female Reproductive Problems
- Vestibular Disease (or problems with balance and mobility)
- Dehydration
- Intestinal Parasites

Additional Reading

Wells, W. 1997. *Collared lizards of the genus Crotaphytus*. Reptiles Magazine 5(4):48-75.

<http://www.reptilesmagazine.com/Lizards/Breeding-Lizards/Breeding-the-Collared-Lizard/>

Husbandry and Captive Propagation of Eastern Collared Lizards, Crotaphytus collaris—Brandon J. Louth, J. Jill Heatley MS DABVP (Avian, Reptilian, Amphibian) DACZM

<http://www.reptilesmagazine.com/Lizard-Species/Collared-Lizard/>

Regular visits to your reptile veterinarian should be scheduled to check for parasites and other early signs of disease and to promote a long, satisfying relationship with your collared lizard. For help in finding a reptile/amphibian veterinarian in your area, contact the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians (www.ARAV.org) or contact the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners (www.ABVP.com/diplomate)

HOW TO KEEP YOUR COLLARED LIZARD HEALTHY, HAPPY AND SAFE!



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NATURAL HISTORY

Collared Lizards are native to Southwestern and Midwestern United States and Mexico. There are currently nine species identified with five species found in the United States and four found in Mexico. These species include the Eastern Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus collaris*), Great Basin Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus bicinctores*), Baja Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus vestigium*), Sonoran Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus nebrisi*), and Reticulated Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus reticulatus*), that can be found in the United States. The Great Basin Collared Lizard is native to both Mexico and the United States. The Venerable Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus antiquus*), Grismer's Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus grismeri*), Dickerson's Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus dickersonae*), and Black-Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus insularis*) are found only in Mexico. They get their name from their distinct colored "collars" around their necks. Some nicknames for Collared Lizards include the Mountain Boomers and the T-Rex of the desert, as they are known to run on two legs after prey and away from predators.

What to Expect from My Animal

Collared Lizards are very smart and active desert lizards that love to explore, climb, and dig. They come in a large variety of natural colors and patterns including blues, greens, yellows, blacks, browns, oranges, reds, and more. They can be trained to be held, hand fed, and take water from syringes. They can be very friendly and easy to work with when captive bred or when worked with on a routine schedule.

Is My Animal Male or Female?

Some species of collared lizards are sexually dimorphic at birth—which means that you can tell the sex of your animal based on physical characteristics such as scale patterns and spotting. Other species do not have physical characteristics until maturity to distinguish their sex. As juveniles, Eastern Collared Lizards and Great Basin Collared lizards may be sexed by looking at the scales on the tail near the vent opening. In males, there is a row of enlarged scales which is absent in females. Female Eastern Collared Lizards have spots near their cloacal vent that are not present in males. Another more reliable way to sex your collared lizard is by candling for hemipene vessels in males as well as having a trained veterinary professional probe for hemipene pockets. As adults, males and females are easier to sex, using the same features noted above, as well as noting their expression of scale and dewlap coloration. In addition, males have enlarged femoral pores as compared to females. In mature males hemipene bulges can also be used to help confirm sex.

Housing and Substrate

Adult collared Lizards should be housed in a minimum of a 75-gallon enclosure, due to their high activity and need for climbing and running space. Appropriate enclosures measure 48x18x21 inches (120x46x53cm). Juveniles can be housed in a 40-gallon (36x18x16 inch or 90x46x40cm) enclosure. Collared lizards should be transitioned to the larger enclosure before they reach maturity at around eight to eighteen months of age. Collared Lizards can be housed together with one male and multiple females. Due to risk of fighting, adult males should NEVER be housed together.

WHAT YOUR VETERINARIAN LOOKS FOR IN A HEALTHY COLLARED LIZARD

Vital Statistics

Average Body Length—varies by species and locale

Males 12-14 inches (30.5-35.5 cm)

Females 10-12 inches (25.4-30.5 cm)

Average Body Weight—varies by species and locale

Males 40-60 grams (larger individuals may exceed 100g)

Females 30-50 grams (gravid females may weight up to 80g)

Average Age to Maturity—varies based on environment and nutrition

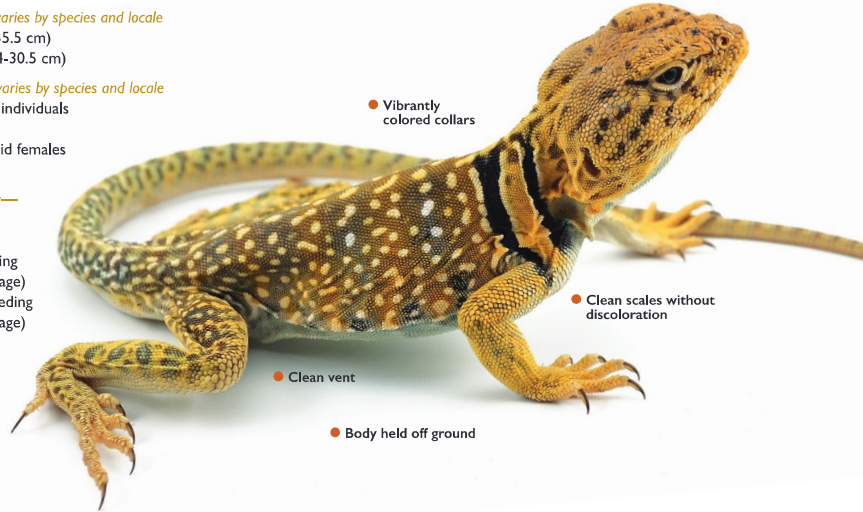
Males 8-18 months (breeding occurs until 6-8 years of age)

Females 6-18 months (breeding occurs until 6-8 years of age)

Longevity

10-12 years

(may exceed 15 years)



NOTE: Most, if not all, reptiles and amphibians carry Salmonella bacteria in their intestinal tract and intermittently or continuously shed these bacteria in their feces, so they are unsuitable pets for very young children and those with compromised immune systems. Good hygiene must always be practiced around all reptiles and amphibians, including collared lizards. For more information, please see the handout, Salmonella Information for Reptile Owners at <http://arav.org/salmonella-bacteria-reptiles>.



The preferred substrate is "washed" play sand. This adds enrichment by encouraging natural digging behavior. Other options include large rocks, non-toxic bark, and Eco Earth™ dirt. Tile or carpeted flooring can also be used for easier cleaning.

Temperature and Humidity Requirements

Collared Lizards are desert lizards from low humidity environments. They require a basking area that will need to reach at least 95-100 degrees Fahrenheit (35-38 degrees Celsius). Avoid temperatures higher than 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43 degrees Celsius). The cooler parts of the enclosure should be maintained in the low to mid 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27-29 degrees Celsius). Nighttime temperatures should be maintained between 70-79 degrees Fahrenheit (21-26 degrees Celsius) range. Avoid temperatures below 65 degrees Fahrenheit

(18 degrees Celsius). Normal room humidity is adequate and should be maintained at 20-30%.

Lighting Requirements

Being a desert species, collared lizards require a source of UVB lighting to assist them in calcium metabolism, stimulating natural behaviors, and promoting good general health. It is also important to regularly change the UVB lighting as its intensity diminishes over time. UV lighting should be changed every 6 months. To simulate seasonal lighting the lights should be set for 12-14 hours of light, with a gradual decrease of this light cycle for the winter months to 8-10 hours of light daily. This change in light cycle is important if the collared lizards are intended for breeding the following spring.