

Water Dragon (*Physignathus cocincinus*)

Origins: Water dragons are a tropical lizard from South East Asia – Vietnam and China especially. They are semi-aquatic but also arboreal, so require large branches for climbing and a high level of humidity.

Adult Size and Life Span: Adult water dragons, especially males, can grow up to 100cm (3') long and can live up to 20 years. They can live in colonial groups of one male with lots of females – more than one male will fight over the females and territory.

Diet and Feeding: In captivity, water dragons will readily eat brown and black (when adult) crickets, locusts and mealworms. If you can guarantee the area has not been treated with insecticides, any grassland can be swept for a selection of native insects such as grasshoppers, moths and hairless caterpillars. Adults will take pinkies and fluffs once a week – ensure these are well defrosted. Crickets can be fed every day, but mealworms only once a week. All food must be dusted with a calcium and vitamin D₃ supplement such as Nutrobal to ensure healthy development of bones. Fresh, clean water should be supplied daily.

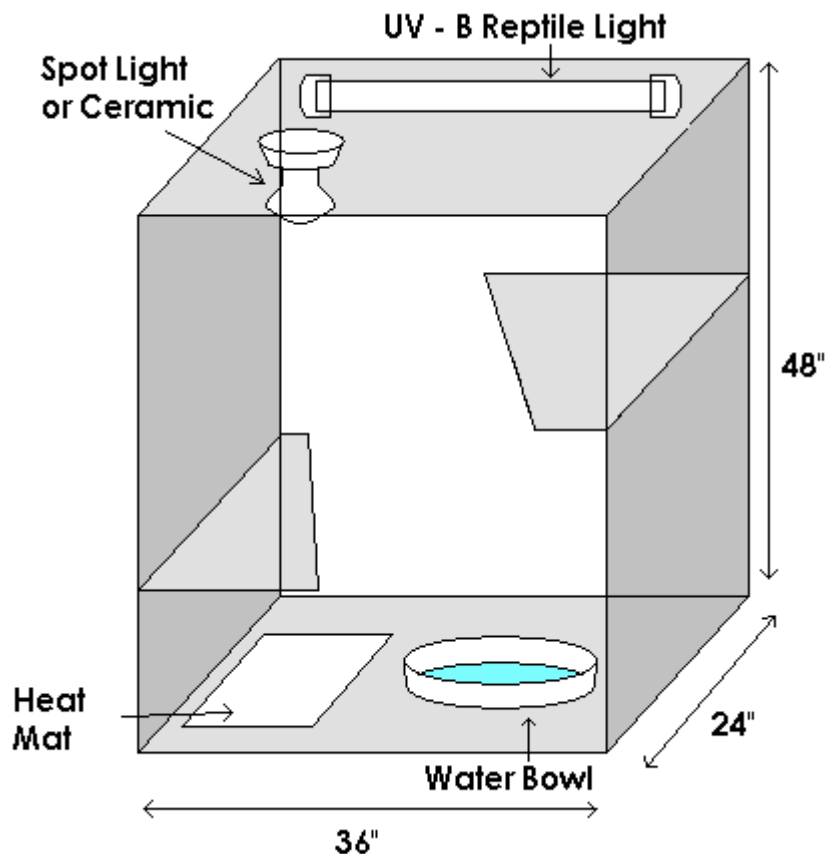
Vivarium Set Up: It is recommended that a minimum 36" x 24" x 48" size vivarium is obtained to house your water dragon(s), but they will appreciate the maximum size you can give them. A basic layout is shown in the diagram. Within this set up, there must be:-

Heating: Daytime temperatures must reach 85 - 90°F (29 - 33 °C) in the hot spots, with cool spots of to 80 - 85°F (26 – 29°C). This is achieved via spot bulbs, heat mats or infra-red ceramic bulbs at the hot-end of the vivarium. Temperatures of 75°F (24 °C) should be maintained at night using one of these methods, and a thermostat may be required for control. The water bowl must be placed in the cooler end of the vivarium.

Swallow Aquatics Caresheet

Lighting: A UV-B bulb is essential to ensure that vitamin D₃ is correctly synthesised and the animal will maintain a strong skeleton. Use a Reptiglo 5.0 bulb, across the back of the vivarium, for 10 -12 hours per day as a simulation of natural daylength.

Substrate and Decoration: Water dragons require a damp, humid rainforest habitat, which can be achieved via orchid bark as a base to the vivarium. Use wood, branches and cork bark to create basking areas and interest for climbing. A large water bowl is required, or alternatively a small fish tank can be set up in the bottom of the tank. Another method could be to create a waterfall which will maintain the humidity levels.



Further Information and Advice: It is recommended that you read and gain as much information as possible before purchasing your water dragon. Books and reliable websites are good sources, or alternatively ask a member of staff. Phone advice is available 9am-6pm, 7 days a week on 01953 718184.