

Mali Uromastyx

Uromastyx dispar maliensis

Class: Reptilia. **Order:** Squamata **Family:** Agamidae

Other names: Spiny-Tailed Lizards; Dabb lizards

Other Subspecies:

Other Relatives: There are 14 species of *Uromastyx*

Brandywine Zoo Uromastyx 0.1

'Carol' 0.1 – female

DOH: 2004 Aq: 4/1/2009

About Carol

Carol was a relinquished pet. Carol weighs 13 oz.

Status Least Concern

Geographic Region

Uromastyx inhabit a range stretching through most of North Africa, the Middle East, and across south-central Asia and into India.

Habitat

Desert, rocky outcrops with vegetation available

Characteristics

Size: 10-18"

Longevity: 15-30 years [1]

Physical Description

- Like many reptiles, these lizards' colors change according to the temperature; during cool weather they appear dull and dark but the colors become lighter in warm weather, especially when basking; the darker pigmentation allows their skin to soak up more sunlight.
- Their spiked tail is muscular and heavy, and can be swung at an attacker with great velocity, usually accompanied by hissing and an open-mouthed display of (small) teeth.
- When **basking**, these lizards color changes from darker in cool weather to lighter in warm weather.

Dimorphism

Males: tend to be more brightly colored than females.

Females: Wild females are smaller and less colorful than males.

Diet: Herbivore

Diet in the Wild: Although they primarily eat plants, they occasionally will eat insects.

Diet at the Zoo: reptile salad (squash, sweet potato, fruit, greens), mealworms occasionally as enrichment

Behavior

- *Diurnal*, day active
- Partake in **behavioral thermoregulation**; they spend most of their waking hours basking in the sun, hiding in underground chambers at daytime or when danger appears.
- They tend to establish themselves in hilly, rocky areas with good shelter and accessible vegetation.

Life without Water

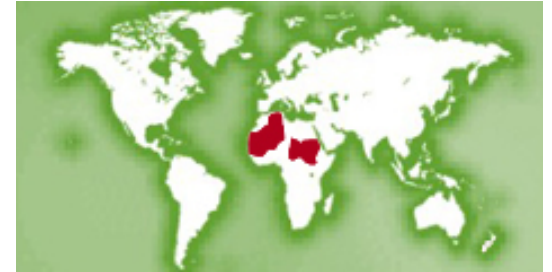
- Most of their water is obtained from the food they eat and also from reabsorbing most of the water in their urine [2].
- Salt is given off during the hot, dry periods through glands along the nasal passages to balance water content in the body [2].

Defense Mechanisms

- Uromastyx generally sleep in their burrows with their tails closest to the opening, in order to prevent intruders.
- Uromastyx can inflate their bodies. This is most likely a defense mechanism to help prevent predators from prying them out of holes or small crevasses [2].

Reproduction

- **Oviparous**, egg-laying
- A female uromastyx can lay anywhere from 10 to 20 eggs [1], depending on age and species.
- Eggs are laid approximately 30 days following copulation with an incubation time of 60-70 days [1].
- Females will guard their nests/burrows where eggs are laid for 8-12 weeks, the time it takes to hatch. Increased aggression the females exhibit around the breeding season is attributed to guarding behavior. Males have no parental investment beyond fertilizing the eggs [3].



- However, it is not clear whether or not the female remains to guard the neonates during their post-hatching period in the burrow. Since *Uromastyx sp.* are a solitary and territorial, young lizards are very likely completely independent upon leaving the burrow and must establish their own territories. It is also likely that the mother retains her own burrow.

Conservation

- **Use & Trade:** The international trade of *Uromastyx acanthinura* is currently regulated by CITES and is listed with all other *Uromastyx* species in Appendix II. Successful trade regulation is difficult to enforce as many can be sold through underground markets. This species is often misidentified, therefore making regulation increasingly difficult.
- **Threats:** Humans often exploit these animals, hunting them for the pet trade and for the food trade. Reportedly, these reptiles are difficult to breed in captivity, so oftentimes they are introduced to the pet trade by wild capture [4].
- **Predators:** preyed upon by many larger reptiles, carnivorous mammals and birds

Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- Their favorite food in the wild is acacia flowers
- They are excellent diggers, and it is thought they use tactile cues to determine appropriate sites for burrows [3].
- The name “Uromastyx” is derived from the Ancient Greek word meaning “tail.”

Glossary: List of definitions of the most important recurrent technical terms used in the text.

Basking – behavior seen in reptiles where they lie in direct sunlight to warm their bodies. See **behavioral thermoregulation**

Behavioral thermoregulation- How a reptile may regulate its body temperature by its behavior. By basking in the sun to warm and moving to the shade to escape the heat of the day allows these animals to maintain a relatively stable temperature.

Oviparous- refers to animals that lay eggs, with little or no other embryonic development within the mother.

Sources

- [1] Reptiles Magazine, "Uromastyx," Reptiles Magazine, 2014. [Online]. Available: <http://www.reptilesmagazine.com/Care-Sheets/Uromastyx-Lizard/>. [Accessed August 2014].
- [2] Staten Island Zoo, "Uromastyx," Staten Island Zoo, 2014. [Online]. Available: http://www.statenislandzoo.org/index.php?option=com_joomgallery&func=detail&id=50. [Accessed November 2014].
- [3] Animal Diversity Web, "Uromastyx acanthinura," Animal Diversity Web, [Online]. Available: http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Uromastyx_acanthinura/. [Accessed August 2014].
- [4] "Uromastyx Care," [Online]. Available: <http://uromastyxcare.com/breeding-babies/>. [Accessed August 2014].