

## Dwarf Spiny Tail Monitor (Ackie)

(*V. Acanthurus*)



Country of Origin	Australia
Average Size	24 Inches
Temperament	Active and Intelligent
Food Source	Livefood, Small Rodents
Experience Level	Beginner

The Dwarf Spiny Tailed Monitor is in the group of Dwarf Monitors, a group of very active, intelligent and fairly easy to keep lizards. They are quite uncommon and highly in demand due to their personalities. Fortunately they will breed in captivity and this will hopefully increase the supply in the future. They have been given the nickname "Ackies", due to the latin name *Acanthurus*, and there are two forms, the "red ackie", and the "yellow ackie". The red is considered rarer, and is often more expensive. This caresheet will cover both.

Because of their activity level, even though these are a small lizard, they will need an enclosure of a medium size. A pair, or trio of ackies would be best kept in at least a 4 foot x 2 foot x 2 foot enclosure. A single ackie could be kept in a 3 x 2 x 2. The warm side of the cage should be approximately 95-100F, whilst the cool side should be about 75-85F. Humidity should be kept at 50% or higher, which can be done with a large water bowl and two or three sprays a day.

Ackies like to climb, but primarily are diggers. A deep substrate should be provided, such as soil, or a combination of sand and soil. Bark chips can also be used, but we recommend top soil, mixed with 25% sand. Branches, rocks, and other climbing materials should be offered. These are a very active and intelligent lizard, and will need a well decorated vivarium to ensure they are not stressed. The yellow ackie is more arboreal than the red.

Ackies are active during the day, and will disappear at sunset. They will always hide themselves completely to sleep, and several hiding places should be offered. They may choose to ignore these, and completely bury themselves in the substrate until invisible. They will emerge the next morning.

They need a large water bowl, and are good swimmers, although often are happy to just soak in the water. It will become dirty quickly and needs to be changed daily. These are the most calm and Handleable of the monitor family, and have an inquisitive nature, enjoying being taken out of the cage. They can however jump and climb, and will enjoy doing so – so be careful if walking around with one, they will leap to something interesting and attempt to scale it. They are not always the best judge of distance or surface and can damage themselves if not watched whilst out of the enclosure. They are a very fulfilling lizard that requires a little more work and attention than average, but rewards you greatly.

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