

Chinese Water Dragon

(*Physignathus cocincinus*)

Country of Origin	South East Asia
Average Size	Females 2 Foot, Males 3 Foot
Temperament	Fast but Friendly, Inquisitive
Food Source	Livefood, Occasional Baby Mice
Experience Level	Beginner



The Chinese (Asian) Water dragon, *Physignathus cocincinus*, is the most commonly seen Water dragon in captivity. Green in colour, an adult can grow up to three feet long, including his tail length. The water dragon is easy to tame, and relatively simple to look after, making it an ideal starter lizard. The Green Water dragons natural range is usually on the Southeast Asian mainland and on the Indo-Australian Archipelago. They are arboreal reptiles and like to climb on branches overhanging water. They are very good swimmers and can hold their breath for as long as thirty minutes at a time.

The minimum vivarium size for an adult water dragon should be 48 x 30 x 36 inches. A variety of substrates can be used, most commonly, bark chips, or soil. The vivarium should be filled with branches and logs, providing ample climbing. A water bowl big enough for the dragon to completely submerge themselves should be provided. Some people like to have an aquarium style vivarium, and fill the bottom entirely with water. This is ideal as long as there is ample climbing and logs for the dragon to sit on. Alternatively, larger specimens can be provided with a large plastic container, such as a cat litter tray, filled with water.

Water dragons should be given around 14 hours a day of light where possible. This should be a basking lamp at one end of the vivarium, and UVB light is absolutely essential. The temperature should be between 82 - 88F during the day and a little bit cooler at night between 75-82F. Because the drop is so minimal it is important to have a heat mat on throughout the night. Mist the dragons regularly to keep humidity high.

Water dragons should be kept in groups where possible, as they are highly social creatures. Only one male should be kept to a vivarium at a time, but several females can be kept with him. Males are territorial, and may fight with other males in a small enclosure. Juveniles (under 2 years old) can be kept together regardless of sex. Male water dragons have larger heads, large jowls, larger femoral pores, and a large line of spikes along their neck and back.

Water dragons can be tamed fairly easily, and are able to be handled freely as adults. They are very rarely aggressive towards humans, and will not bite unless mistreated. The water dragon is very popular, easy to look after, and full of personality!