

Bearded Dragon (Inland)

(*Pogona vitticeps*)

Class: *Reptilia*

Order: *Squamata*

Family: *Agamidae*

Characteristics:

Bearded dragons are named for the frilly beard of spines around the lower jaw and dewlap. Adult bearded dragons average 18-22 inches in length from snout to the tip of the tail. Bearded dragons usually weigh between 280-500 grams. Males are usually larger than females, however females are usually stockier.

Behavior:

Bearded dragons are most active during the day. They sun themselves on rocky outcrops or trees where they have a good view of the surrounding area. They spend time climbing on rocks and trees and moving across the ground.

Reproduction:

Inland bearded dragons can reach sexual maturity between 1-2 years old. Males will bob their heads rapidly to court a female. If the female is interested, she will also bob her head. During copulation, a male's beard will darken to an almost black color. Females lay 15-25 eggs in a shallow nest dug into sand. Hatchlings are very small (2 grams and 4 inches long) but grow very rapidly and reach adult size within a year.

Diet:

Wild: Plant matter, insects, occasionally small rodents and other lizards.

Zoo: Crickets, mealworms, vegetables, greens, bearded dragon pellet.

Conservation:

Bearded dragons are listed as Least Concern by IUCN redlist. They are commonly found in Australia and are a favorite in the pet trade. The Australian government has banned the export of bearded dragons for the pet trade. They have no significant threats.

FYI:

-A submissive lizard will "wave" with one limb to a dominant lizard by standing on three limbs and slowly rotating the fourth limb in a circle.

-Bearded dragons store fat in their large abdomens to survive during the lean season. They will also dig into the ground and stay there until more favorable conditions exist.

Citations

<http://www.torontozoo.com/ExploretheZoo/AnimalDetails.asp?pg=521>

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