

Common Name: Inland bearded dragon	Scientific Name: <i>Pogona vitticeps</i>
Class: Reptilia Order: Squamata Family: Agamidae	Feeding Type: Insectivore Statistics: Body Length: 6-9 in. Tail Length: 9-12 in.

DESCRIPTION: Medium sized lizard with spiny projections around its head and sides of body, particularly under the chin. It has fairly long fingers with claws so it can climb branches and trees. It is usually brownish-gray, but may show other color phases in the wild. It is fearless and has out-going personalities. There are six or seven different species of bearded dragons.

RANGE: Eastern and southeastern Australia

HABITAT: Arid, rocky, semi-desert with open woodlands

ADAPTATIONS: The “beard” can be extended in a defensive behavior to make the animal appear larger. This “beard” can also change colors to jet black when alarmed or during courtship.

It is a very social animal and has a rich gestural language, such as bobbing heads at one another, gaping mouths, flattening bodies and tilting as they circle one another, swishing tail, and using their tongue to check out the environment.

Some behaviors, for instance, raising one arm and holding it stationary or slowly waving it in circles, means that it is trying to tell the other dragon that it is a friend and means no harm. It is also a very curious animal and loves to explore new areas. One thing to note, it will often show aggressive behavior if it is exploring a new area and does not want to go back to its enclosure at the time its caregiver wants it to.

It will sometimes confuse human body movements for these same behaviors. For instance, if you bring your hand into the enclosure with your fingers together and bob your hand, it may take this as a threat. If you then make a circle with your fingers and thumb while lowering your hand, you are showing you are submissive.

Because it lives in an arid region, it can get all the water it needs from food in the wild. Water is supplemented in captivity because of food variations. Bearded dragons are skillful climbers and often enjoy basking on fence posts and branches in the mornings and afternoons. During the hottest part of the day and the cold evenings it will go underground to protect itself from extreme elements.

REPRODUCTION/GROWTH: Territorial males begin fighting in spring, and the females become submissive. When she is ready to lay her eggs she will dig a burrow, sometimes digging more than one before selecting a suitable spot. The 15-35 eggs hatch after 69-79 days. The cloacal opening in males is significantly larger than in females. Males also have wider heads than females.

LONGEVITY: 4 to 10 years

PREY/PREDATOR: Prey to larger carnivores, including birds and reptiles.
Predator of insects and small rodents.

DIET: WILD: Insects, fruits, vegetables and flowers
SZ: Mealworms, crickets, apples, carrots, and kale

STATUS: The Australian government protects all Australian reptiles, and it is illegal for foreigners to collect any native wildlife. Successful captive breeding has been established in the U.S., and these are popular pets.

SPECIAL NOTES: There are three species of bearded dragons currently being bred in the United States. Juveniles and females will often "arm wave," holding one arm up in the air and waving it back and forth to appease breeding mates.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

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