

Keeping of rainforest chameleon (*Furcifer balteatus* Duméril & Bibron, 1851) at BION Terrarium Center

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Furcifer balteatus (two-banded or rainforest chameleon) is endemic to Madagascar inhabiting its south-eastern part (Fig. 1). *F. balteatus* was most recently described by Necas in 1999 as *Furcifer balteatus* (Necas, 2004). It is reported from Ranamafana where the average temperature is +14 - +20 °C (57.0 - 68.0 F) with annual rainfall of about 4,000 mm (160.0 in) (*Furcifer balteatus*" (in German). Pantherchameleon.de. Retrieved 2012-11-11). Its distribution area is estimated of 1,971 km² (761 miles²) but has a "patchy distribution". They occupy forested areas of relatively mild climate at elevation between 800 and 1100 m a. s. l.



Figure 1. *F. balteatus* natural distribution on mountain forested areas of Madagascar (<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/172934/176384350>).

Coloration of *F. balteatus* has greenish-blueish background with ability to camouflage against the tree canopies. Coloration is added with two dark-green stripes and one whitish stripe and several dark-green spots. Snout-to-vent length is about 24 cm (9 in) with the same tail length. The males have a pair of "horns" 1.5 cm (0.6 in) long on their heads (Necas, 2004; Glaw, Vences, 2007).

It is a rare species and most of the registrations of it in the wild were about single animals. This species has EN (Endangered) status in IUCN Red List with deforestation, climate change and degradation of their forest habitats as main threats leading to its

currently estimated decreasing population trend. *F. balteatus* is a CITES-listed species (Appendix II).

Keeping and breeding requirements

Adult individuals are kept individually in terrariums (glass or breeze type) 65*65*80 cm (26*26*32 in). Interior decoration includes branches, living or artificial plants (Fig. 2), water dripping system. We don't provide any additional heating and keep chameleons at a room temperature.



Figure 2. *F. balteatus* male inside a decorated terrarium.

Lighting. We provide 12 hours of day light using a simple 40W lamp. UVB light can be used but from our experience it is not necessary.

Temperature. Daytime temperature is +24 - +26 °C (75.2 - 78.8 F), nighttime - +21 - +23 °C (69.8 - 73.4 F).

Diet. Diet consists of gut loaded crickets, cockroaches, zophobas. We don't give any additional vitamins, only Calcium+D3 supplementation. We offer food every other day (4-5 insects per head).

References

1. *Furcifer balteatus*" (in German). Pantherchameleon.de. Retrieved 2012-11-11.
2. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/172934/176384350>
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