

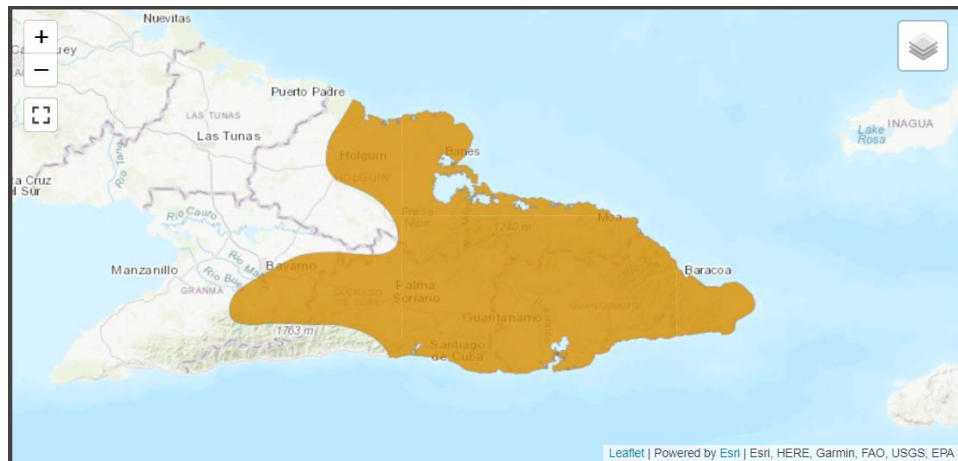
Keeping of Cuban false chameleon (*Chamaeleolis porcus* (Cope, 1864)) at BION Terrarium Center

Oleksii Marushchak

Head, Research and Development Department, BION Terrarium Center, Kyiv, Ukraine

DESCRIPTION, DISTRIBUTION AND BIOLOGY

Anolis (*Chamaeleolis*) *porcus* Rodriguez-Schettino et al. 2013 is a middle-sized reptile endemic to tropical forests of Cuba. This species belongs to Dactyloidae family and is known as oriente bearded anole and Cuban false chameleon. The *Chamaeleolis* genus is often synonymized with *Anolis* so it is not a mistake to call the species *Anolis porcus*. These oviparous lizards are tree-dwelling obligatory snail-eaters typically found in the vicinity of Guantanamo province, Cuba, however its natural range is much bigger. The species is distributed up to 600 m above sea level (Nicholson et al., 2012; Holáňová et al., 2012; Rodríguez Schettino et al., 2013).



Current distribution of *C. porcus* (photo taken from
<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/75084800/75171786>)

Snout-to-vent length (SVL) of males is about 16 cm (6.37 in) while females are slightly bigger with SVL of about 17 cm. Head is massive with big jaws that are well-developed for crushing of snails' shells. Tongue's color is intense black except for grayish lower sides. Dorsal part is generally clear gray and without spots or dots, but with metachrosis (brownish or greenish gray to black). Supraaxillary patch is grayish white. Casque, labials and lateral parts of the face have well-defined black dots and markings. In juveniles such markings form a sort of a "6-lined star" around an eye. Ventral part brownish with yellowish shades under the limbs. Dewlap is present in both

sexes being dull purple in females, brownish to orange-yellow and red basally and medially in males and with 4 well-defined brownish bands (both sexes); juveniles colored and patterned like adults. Iris is very dark chestnut in adults (<https://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/species?genus=Anolis&species=porcus>). Males can be easily distinguished from females both being mature animals and hatchlings. Immediately after hatching males will have two enlarged scales in precloacal region of the tail that can be seen with a naked eye, while females have many small almost similarly-sized scales. This feature remains with them throughout their lives and can be used for sex identification of adults as well. Adult males also have hemipenial bulges (Rodríguez Schettino, 1999).

This species is included in IUCN Red List being labeled as a LC (Least Concern) species (<https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/75084800/75171786>). This means that the species is evaluated as not a focus of species conservation because the specific species is still plentiful in the wild. *C. porcus* is also listed in Appendix III of CITES (<https://cites.org/eng/taxonomy/term/4067>).



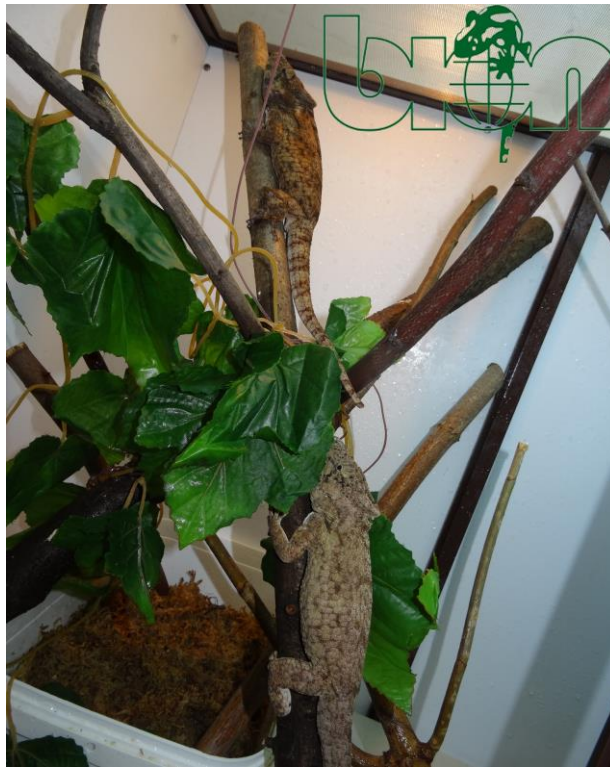
Young male of *C. porcus*.

KEEPING AT BION TERRARIUM CENTER

ADULTS

Keeping. A pair of *C. porcus*, according to the information obtained from Tatiana Latysheva, can be kept in a terrarium of 40*40*45 cm (15.74*15.74*17.71 in). We keep

our reptiles in pairs or trios (1.1 or 1.2) inside terrariums of 90*50*60 cm (35.43*19.68*23.62 in). Two males should not be kept together.



Inner decoration of *C. porcus* enclosure.

The doors of the terrarium as well as the roof are made of fine metal net in order to provide sufficient ventilation. The inner decoration of the terrarium includes vertical and angled branches, a regularly changed paper instead of substrate (however providing coconut substrate or sphagnum moss is also an option), moist chamber (a box of 30*20*20 cm (11.81*7.87*7.87 in) filled with humid sphagnum moss. This box is used by females for making their clutches. Artificial plants are needed to provide visual barriers for the animals. Water dish with fresh, regularly changed water is obligatory.

Lighting & Temperature. Ambient temperature is +26 - +28 °C (78.8 - 82.4 F). At the basking point temperature is +30 - +32 °C (86.0 - 89.6 F), but not higher. Lighting period is 10-12 hours. We provide basking spot by using a simple 40W incandescent lamp. We use Zoomed 10.0 UVB tubes to provide ultraviolet lighting.

Humidity. Humidity level is 80-90%. We do light spraying twice a day allowing the inner decoration to dry out. This is also an additional source of water for these reptiles who generally likes high humidity. Automatic water dripping system will be a plus as well.



Copulating of *C. porcus*.

Diet. *C. porcus* diet should be as varied as possible, however one should take into consideration that up to 80% of their diet consist of snails. Other 20% include house crickets, banana crickets, cockroachs and locusts. The insects are always dusted with calcium carbonate supplementation or sepia powder. Feeding takes place 3 times a week by offering 5-6 large crickets or 2 locusts or preferably 6 snails of appropriate size. All insects should be gut-loaded prior to the feeding. Zophobas and mealworms are not recommended for introduction into the diet. During breeding season, the amount of snails should be increased especially for females. Sometimes remnants of snails' shells can be regurgitated and this is a normal thing. They bite the snails with their jaws, then partially spitting out or burping out the shell. Snails, if there is an excess, can be left in the terrarium. We offer the following snails: *Achatina* sp., *Cornu aspersum* (favorite food item), *Helix pomatia*. If there are only adult snails available, then they need to be broken and cut into 3-4 equal parts and offer them to the animals using tweezers.

References

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2. Holáňová, V., Reháč, I., Frynta, D. 2012. *Anolis sierramaestrae* sp. nov. (Squamata: Polychrotidae) of the “chamaeleolis” species group from Eastern Cuba. *Acta Societatis Zoologicae Bohemicae* 76 (1–2): 45–52.

3. Rodríguez Schettino, L. (ed.) 1999. The iguanid lizards of Cuba. University Press of Florida, 428 pp.
4. Rodríguez Schettino, L., Mancina, C.A., Rivalta González V. 2013. Reptiles of Cuba: checklist and geographic distributions. Smithsonian Herp. Inf. Serv. (144): 1-96.
5. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/75084800/75171786>
6. <https://cites.org/eng/taxonomy/term/4067>
7. <https://reptile-database.reptarium.cz/species?genus=Anolis&species=porcus>