



*Photo Credit: Natural History on the Net

Chinese Warty Newts (*Paramesotriton chinensis*)

Warty Yet Lovable Newts!

The Chinese warty newts are a genus of semi-aquatic to aquatic newts consisting of approximately 15 species, ranging over southern to eastern, and Southeastern Asia, with the predominance of species occurring in China and Vietnam. Many species within this genus have only been relatively recently described, as recently as 2008. These medium sized to large, pond, stream, and freshwater marsh dwelling newts can be variable in their coloration and appearance, depending on the species, although the most commonly available species in the pet trade, *Paramesotriton chinensis*), typically has a warty skin and appearance on an overall blackish, dark olive to olive-green, brown, olive-brown, to grayish brown, and their bellies, or ventral surfaces can also have several bright, vibrant yellowish to orangish or reddish-orange blotches or spots that may be displayed in their unken reflex defensive displays. While the Chinese warty newt is, or at least has been the most commonly kept and imported species, other species in the genus which may be available as well include *P. deloustali*, *P. hongkongensis*, and *P. caudopunctatus*.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Amphibia

Order: Caudata/Urodela

Suborder: Salamandroidea

Family: Salamandridae

Genus: *Paramesotriton*

Species: *Paramesotriton chinensis**

*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, Chinese warty newts can attain potential longevity of at least 5 to 10 years or more.

Distribution and Habitat

Chinese warty newts, and their related species within the genus, generally occur from southern,

eastern, and southeastern Asia, with most species being found only in China and/or Vietnam. Within this range, these medium sized to large newts occupy subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests, rivers, streams, and freshwater marshes, as well as surrounding forested or wooded environments and other secondary habitats.

Origin/History

Paramesotriton chinensis Gray, 1859.

Not much specific information is available as to when Chinese warty newts were first imported, although they probably were for commonly imported species for many decades since at least the 1970's and 1980's. In 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would amend its regulations under the Lacey Act to create an interim rule adding all species of salamanders from 20 genera, of which there are 201 species, to the list of injurious amphibians. This was due to efforts to prevent the introduction, establishment, and spread of the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (or Bsal) into ecosystems of the United States.

With this interim rule, both importation into the United States and interstate transportation between States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or any territory or possession of the United States of any live or dead specimen, including parts, of these 20 genera of salamanders would be prohibited, except by permit for zoological, educational, medical, or scientific purposes. This rule would most certainly impact the U.S. herpetoculture industry and pet trade when it came to its reliance on importing this, and many other of its caudate (salamander and newt) species into the U.S.

Experience Level Required

Novice-Beginner to Intermediate/Moderate.

Size

Chinese warty newts are a large, robust species of newt that range from 3.5 to 6.0 inches in total snout-to-tail length. Snout to vent length ranges from about 2.4 to 2.6 inches SVL in males, and 2.3 to 3.0 inches snout-to-vent length (SVL) in females.

Housing and Enclosure

Enclosure System: Primarily Aquatic. Chinese warty newts are primarily aquatic and require the appropriate aquatic to semi-aquatic setup. Housing must be sealed and escape proof with a secured top or aquarium hood. A 10 to 20 gallon aquarium, terrarium, or other enclosure is suitable for these newts, or a pair of these newts. They can also be kept communally in proportionally larger housing. The enclosure should consist of a primarily aquatic setup with a floating platform or other dry area these newts can resort to on a sand or gravel substrate. An appropriate filter can be used to help maintain water clarity and cleanliness. Also provide ample hiding opportunities in the aquarium using live plants and rocks. Enclosures should be spot cleaned, sterilized, and water cleaned and changed regularly every 1 to 2 weeks. Chinese warty newts are usually not particular about water quality, as long as the water is maintained clean, and PH of either extremes are avoided. Sponge filters driven by an air pump, as well as submersible power filters can work well in helping to keep the water quality clean.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Chinese warty newts have simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it in moderated amounts can be greatly beneficial for their health, immune system, and overall wellness. These newts otherwise do not require any other special lighting or heating unless live plants are also

maintained, although water temperatures should be maintained at around 60 to 70 degrees F at most. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, submersible water heater, or UTH (under tank heating element). They are susceptible to health and husbandry related issues if water temperatures are too cold or too warm for these unusual amphibians. More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well. Humidity is not as applicable for these primarily aquatic species of newts.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous to Carnivorous; Chinese warty newts are largely opportunistic feeders in the wild, feeding on small fish, a wide range of invertebrates, and carrion. Food items that are readily accepted by these amphibians can include earthworms, mealworms, waxworms, bloodworms, small feeder crickets and roaches, silkworms, or other feeder insects as well as daphnia, brine shrimp, white worms or black worms, or some commercially available fish and amphibian diets. Recommended feeding is two to three times weekly. Feeder insects should also be gut loaded and/or dusted with additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplements as well prior to feeding to ensure optimal nutrition and health. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

As with most amphibians, Chinese warty newts are fragile animals, and handling should be done carefully or avoided and kept to a minimum whenever possible. Ideally, an aquarium net of appropriate size can be used to move aquatic caudates whenever necessary. All amphibians breathe and respire through their skin, as well as absorb water through this means. It is therefore important to avoid wearing any chemicals or lotions on your hands, which can be potentially harmful or even fatal to amphibians. It is also important to wash or rinse hands thoroughly, and ensure they are adequately moistened before and after handling any amphibians in order to prevent them from drying out.

****Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens****

Contact

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