



*Photo Credit: Amusing Planet



Peter's Rock Agama (*Agama picticauda*), Adult Male.



Peter's Rock Agama (*Agama picticauda*), Juvenile/Adult Female.

Spiderman Rock Agama (*Agama mwanzae*) and Related Rock/Red Headed Agama species (*Agama* spp.)

A Super Hero Agamid

The spiderman agama is also known by the common names of Mwanza flat headed rock agama, red headed agama, or Spiderman rock agama. These agamids are an active, diurnal species that may often be seen basking or foraging among their rocky microhabitats often during the peak or heat of the day. Spiderman agamas are named for the male's vibrant red, reddish-orange, to pinkish heads, and fore bodies, and blue to bluish hind limbs, tails, and posterior halves of their bodies. As with many agamids, there is also sexual dimorphism in this species, with females typically being much drabber and less colorful, and are mostly grayish to grayish brown in color. Although many specimens remain wild caught, this species of agamid has become a popular, hardy, and colorful pet lizard to maintain in captivity, as they are named after the male's red and blue coloration after the famous and popular Marvel super-hero, Spider Man.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Suborder: Lacertilia

Infraorder: Iguania

Family: Agamidae

Subfamily: Agaminae

Genus: Agama

Species: *Agama mwanzae**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, spiderman agamas can be expected to attain longevity of 10 to 15 years or more.

Distribution and Habitat

The Mwanza rock agama, or more popularly known as the spiderman agama, is a relatively small to medium sized agamid lizard indigenous to eastern to east central, sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, this species occurs within the countries of Tanzania, Rwanda, and Kenya. Within this range, these agamids can occupy a variety of arid to semi-arid, terrestrial habitats and environments including rocky deserts to semi-deserts, hillsides, scrublands and savannahs, to dry, open forests and woodlands, where they use rock crevices and burrows to thermoregulate, forage for food, and to avoid predation.

Origin/History

Agama spp. Daudin, 1802; Agama agama (Linnaeus, 1758)-Red Headed Agama; Agama mwanzae Loveridge, 1923-Mwanza Flat Headed Rock Agama; Agama picticauda Peters, 1877-Peter's Rock Agama, and Others.

Various species of Agama spp. have long been common imports in the pet trade since at least the 1960's and 1970's. Peter's rock agamas were first documented in Florida in 1976, where they would become established in many Florida counties. They are seldom captive-bred, but would also become sourced out of Florida for the pet trade once again through various means.

Experience Level Required

Novice/Beginner.

Size

Adult male Spiderman and related rock agamas typically reach 6.0 to 12.0 inches (snout-to-tail length), depending on the exact species. Females are somewhat smaller, ranging from 4.0 to 8.0 inches (snout-to-tail length). Maximum recorded snout-to-vent length is about 6.18 inches (SVL).

Housing and Enclosure

Enclosure System: Primarily Terrestrial. Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling spiderman agamas can be housed in a 10 to 15 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adult spiderman agamas require a minimum of a 20 gallon long terrarium or enclosure. Hatchling and adult spiderman agamas can be maintained on a substrate of play sand mixtures, or ground walnut shell substrates. Avoid using substrates made from reptile bark that result in environments that are too humid. Provide a small dish of clean water, and change and clean it every several days, or sooner if fouled. Soaking them at least once weekly in lukewarm water for 15 to 20 minutes can also help raise their hydration. Provide ample basking and hiding opportunities by providing artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, or logs.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

These agamids are well suited for living in hot, arid conditions. For basking, create a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure with an appropriate sized under tank heating pad, ceramic, or radiant heat emitter. Ideal temperatures for spiderman agamas range in the low to mid 90's degrees F on the cool side and around 100 to 120 degrees F on the warm, basking side. Providing the correct amounts of UVA/UVB overhead incandescent and florescent lighting, and calcium-to-phosphorus ratios is essential for ensuring the health and overall well-being of spiderman agamas in captivity. Without UVA/UVB, or adequate amounts of it, they can be

susceptible to the abnormal bone growth and development known as Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD), and other health and development maladies. Also be sure to spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least twice per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2 to 3 months. 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. Red headed agamas should ideally be maintained at relatively low humidity levels at, or around 40 to 60%.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous to Omnivorous; Spiderman agamas are primarily insectivorous in the wild, catching and consuming a variety of insects and other invertebrates. They will also occasionally eat smaller vertebrates as well. In captivity, feed spiderman agamas mostly a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. They can also be given a mixed assortment of chopped up vegetables including carrots, peas, collard, mustard, and dandelion greens, and beans. Several commercially available omnivore mix diets are also available. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. Spiderman agamas also require additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation 1 to 2 times weekly or as otherwise directed for optimal health and development. This is in order to prevent Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD) and other growth and nutritional deficiencies. Their feeding frequency will depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed them, as obesity and other health related issues can become an issue. 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

Spiderman agamas still remain fairly new to the pet industry, and have not seen frequent captive breeding as of yet. As such, they can be a quick, fast moving, and skittish species to handle, requiring minimal or careful, deliberate handling to prevent injuries and/or escapes. With time and patience, however, this species can become bolder and more accustomed to human presence. **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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Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility. We cannot make any claims or guarantees regarding any information in this care sheet therein. This care sheet may be reprinted or redistributed only in its entirety.

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