



Uromastyx

Uromastyx geyri



Spike

I was born in 2019, and I came to the Racine Zoo in February 2023!

I am currently an animal that lives off-exhibit behind the scenes of the zoo. My keepers would describe me as independent, yet curious! I am often found sleeping in my burrows, or basking flat against my rocks!

I am also known as the **spiny-tailed lizard**

UROMASTYX AT A GLANCE



- Uromastyx have a large tail that is covered in **hard, spiny scales**.
- They can use it as a **defense mechanism** to club away potential predators. When they sleep, they will put their tails outside their burrows as a warning to ward off predators.



- An **indentation** on the tops of their heads acts as a **"cup"** to collect water. In the mornings, they will collect and drink dew water.



- **Loose, wrinkly skin** helps the spiny-tailed lizard to deal with hot days and freezing nights. The access of skin can also help to provide more surface area to absorb more sunlight.

Adult size:

3 to 4 feet long

1 to 2 pounds

Dark coloring to help absorb heat quickly



Avg. life expectancy in native habitats:
15 years

Avg. life expectancy in human care:
up to 30 years

WHERE ARE NATIVE UROMASTYX HABITATS LOCATED?



Uromastyx can be found in southern Algeria, Eastern Mali, and northern-central Niger. They typically live in dry, rocky deserts and areas that have little or sparse vegetation. They can burrow, but they prefer to stay in rocky crevices.

Uromastyx Behavior

FLICKING TAIL

When feeling threatened, uromastyx will swing around their spiky tails like a club to hit or scar potential dangers.

This may indicate that I feel unsafe or uncomfortable in my environment!



BASKING

Like other reptiles, the spiny-tailed lizard is cold blooded, and relies on an external heat source to stay warm.

At the zoo, I bask under a UV heat lamp to warm up. Most times you can find me sleeping in this spot!



SHEDDING

Shedding is a natural process that all reptiles go through to help them grow.

When I shed, my keepers give me extra special attention; as this process can be quite stressful for me!



HEAD BOBBING

Many lizards use a head bobbing behavior as a means of communication. This movement could mean many things, but sometimes means they are claiming their territory.

I might be saying hello to you!

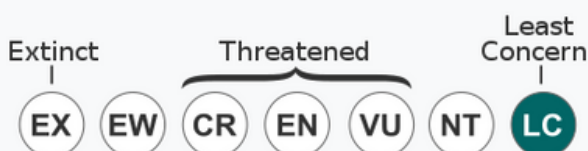


- Uromastyx's live solitary lives, but can be found in small groups where there is a dominant male and several females. The dominant male will defend its home range from other males
- Females will use their sharp claws to dig holes to lay eggs.
- They are diurnal, meaning they are most active during the day, and being the most active during the hottest part of the day.
- They are capable of getting moisture out of even the driest seeds and plants.

Uromastyx Conservation

They are listed as **Least Concern**. However, human expansion is leading to overall habitat loss and fragmentation. In addition, populations are thought to be in decline due to the overcollection for the pet trade.

Conservation status



Least Concern (IUCN 3.1)^[1]

How can we help?

Owning a lizard like a uromastyx takes a lot of work, needs a lot of resources, and needs research to care for. Before owning any pet, make sure you can give it the love and care it needs, and make sure you know all the responsibilities you need to own a pet.

You can help native lizards in Wisconsin by leaving leaf litter or tree debris in your background or gathered in one place. It provides valuable places for them to rest and nest