

Ceratophora sp. information and care reference



Background:

Ceratophora are a truly entertaining genus to keep. At the time of writing this, we currently work with *Ceratophora tennentii* and *C. stoddartii*, the leaf-nose and rhino-nose lizards, respectively. The genus is comprised of five species; *C. aspera*, *C. erdeleni*, *C. karu*, *C. stoddartii*, and *C. tennentii*. It is worth noting that this genus is one now protected under CITES (as of CoP18 in 2019), with *C. aspera* and *C. stoddartii* being listed under CITES Appendix II, and the other three species under Appendix I.

We point this out so that interested individuals are aware to ensure any animals they get are genuinely captive bred, as all species have a zero export quota from their native habitat in Sri Lanka, where they have also been protected from export for commercial purposes since 1993, when Sri Lanka's Flora and Fauna Protection Ordinance (FFPO) was amended to include many of the island's endemic lizard species.



Figure 1. *Ceratophora stoddartii* pair. L- Female, R- Male.

Natural History:

The genus *Ceratophora* was initially established with the description of *C. stoddarti* (Gray, 1835), followed by *C. tennentii* and *C. aspera* (Günther, 1861 and 1864), and later with *C. karu* and *C. erdeleni* (Pethiyagoda & Manamendra-Arachchi, 1998.)

Of the species, *C. stoddarti* habitat usage has been assessed (Senarathne, 2016), and found to have negative correlation with temperature, positive correlation with relative humidity, and no correlation with leaf litter density for adults. Hatchlings and juveniles demonstrate the same correlations for temperature and humidity, but with a preference with higher leaf litter density.

Generally speaking, suitable habitat for the genus is exposed to high relative humidity (>75% at most times), high rainfall, and moderate temperatures (18~33°C; 64~90°F.) The habitats of each species are primarily found on the climbing slopes of the mountain ranges in Sri Lanka, with wild specimens often found on low brush, or thin trees and their branches. Their shared morphology, possessing longer rear legs is well suited to their stereotypical locomotion, which is often short jumps between branches or perches, or rapidly climbing to escape danger.



Figure 2. *Ceratophora tennentii* hatchling, displaying its proboscis.

Of the five species in the genus, *C. tennentii* and *C. aspera* share similar leaf-like rostral proboscises (common names: leaf-nose and rough-nose lizard, respectively) which are present at hatch and grow over time, *C. stoddartii* possess a horn-like rostral proboscis (common name: rhino-horn lizard) which is absent at hatch and develops over time, and *C. karu* and *C. erdeleni* lack rostral proboscises.

Care:

These animals tend to spend a lot of time clinging to vertical perches (tree trunks, branches, shrubs, etc) in the lower portions of the forests. Their longer rear legs make them well suited for jumping between nearby perches, or quickly getting to higher ground. Taking these into consideration, captive husbandry should be modeled as such. As a minimum for a pair or trio, we suggest at least an 18" x 18" x 24" enclosure. We currently house ours in 24" cubes and they utilize every bit of their enclosures. Ample climbing surfaces are important for them to feel secure. They are bold animals, but still need to be able to safely retreat when they please. We utilize 3-4

vertical branches mounted in the enclosure, two horizontal perches, and plant growth as well. We also utilize custom backing on the sides and back for additional climbing surfaces for both the animals and plant growth. Please see the video linked [here](#) for examples.

Temperature and humidity:

We keep ours under the same ambient conditions as our other cloud forest-dwelling species: ambient humidity in the room being constantly ~55%, and ambient temperatures around 72-76°F depending on time of day. Temperatures within the enclosures keep close with ambient, though right near their

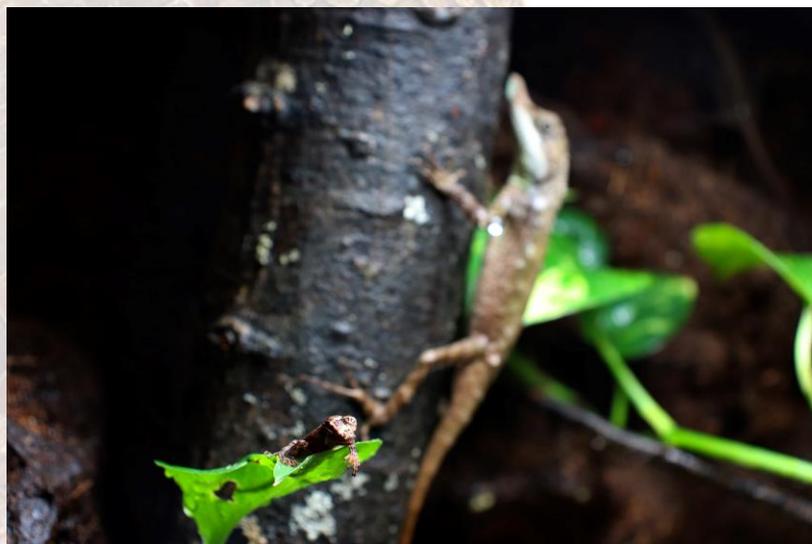


Figure 3. *Ceratophora tennentii* hatchling found resting on a leaf within vivarium with parents. Sire in the background.

lights offers a warmer zone that hovers around 82-84°F. They do occasionally utilize this zone, but not often or for extended periods.

Humidity within the enclosures should remain around 60-65% , with peaks around 85-90% when misting or fogging. Misting should be done lightly at least 2-3x daily, and heavily roughly every 3 days, depending on your ambient humidity levels in your area. Hydration is critical for these animals, and like many agamids, they will very rarely drink standing water. They require surface agitation/movement to acknowledge the water, so a bubbler in a water source, a moving water feature (such as a waterfall), or a dripping system are necessary.

Nutrition:

Ceratophora are insectivores, so they do not eat the meal replacement diets such as Pangea or Repashy. However, they will often readily eat Repashy's Grub Pie, since the texture is similar to that of worms and slugs, which are natural prey items for them. They also have quite fast metabolisms, so we offer ours well-gutloaded insects 3-4 times a week. Typically 1/2"-5/8" crickets for adults, and pinhead- 1/4" crickets for younger animals. We do like to implement dietary enrichment for them, and also offer diverse prey items such as slugs, snails, flies, etc., all of which we culture here so we have control over their nutritional value. They will tong feed but are hesitant to feed from bowls. We have found, in our experiences, that it is best to let them hunt as they wish.

We do keep all of them housed under UVB, and also supplement their insects 3-4 times a month with calcium with low Vitamin D₃ content (Repashy's Calcium Plus LoD), and most other feedings are supplemented with light vitamin dusting (Repashy's SuperVite and small amounts of Vitamin A plus.)



Figure 4. *Ceratophora tennentii* fresh hatchling

Breeding:

We don't do anything special to get our groups breeding. However, our entire room goes through seasons, with reduced misting and shortened photoperiods in cooler months (8hr on, 16hr off opposed to 14:10 in peak summer months.) That being said, breeding behavior and eggs haven't necessarily correlated with those shifts in captivity. Copulation witnessed *in situ* has reportedly had high correlation with high rainfall, regardless of humidity.

Ceratophora will bury their eggs. A trend we have noticed with all of our females is 'decoy nests'; in which a female will dig 2-3 spots and not cover them, but will cover the spot where she has deposited very well. Once they start laying, females will lay clutches of multiple eggs (average clutch size for our *C. tennentii* group has been 8, and average from *C. stoddartii* has been 5) every 4-6 weeks. We incubate eggs on flourite that is mixed with water at a roughly 2:1 ratio (flourite: H₂O) by weight, with no ventilation in the incubation chamber aside from opening it about once a week for fresh air exchange. Incubation temperatures should be low 70s°F, with night-time drops at least a few degrees. Day temps of ~73°F and night drops to ~67°F have worked great for us and giving incubation periods averaging 95 days for eggs which do not undergo a diapause (lack or pause of development.) We have had clutches undergo diapause for 1-2 months, when laid in months with shortened photoperiods.