

Policy: SC-36-300
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Title: Husbandry Care for Bearded Dragons

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the minimum standards of care for Bearded Dragons.

II. Policy:

All departments providing care for Bearded Dragons must meet or exceed these minimum requirements based on the Public Health Service Policy, and the ILAR *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*.

III. Procedure:

Daily: (365 days a year without exception)

Check each holding tank and observe each animal for health problems. Check light timers, timers are set to provide UVB and heat bulbs on a 10 hour on/14 hour off cycle. Check cage thermometers for proper temperature range (78-102 °F). Feed bearded dragons. Spot clean cages (feed dragons first, allowing them approximately 10 minutes to eat the insects). Change bedding as needed. Ensure each cage has water in soaking bowl. Record deaths and euthanasia on the room log sheet. Document the room activities on room log sheet (feeding, animal number, room temperature).

Weekly:

Sprinkle calcium over the greens fed to the bearded dragons. Clean and disinfect dragon holding tanks and soaking water bowl. Mist dragons and tank well with warm water.

Biweekly:

Sweep/squeegee floors to remove dust, dirt, and excess water. Wipe down shelves used for housing when containers are removed for washing. Follow the UCD House Keeping Policy.

Monthly:

Disinfect and sanitize shelves/racks and scrub brushes, sponges, enrichment devices, primary enclosure, and floors.

Feeding:

When feeding insects to bearded dragons, specific criteria for gut-loading the insects are required (i.e. proper feed offered to insects prior to offering them to the bearded dragons, such as greens, chopped veggies, crushed non-sugar cereals, ground dry cat food) The insects should then be

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"dusted" in a calcium powder. Live food sources need to be maintained and managed to ensure steady supply and the health and suitability of the organism being used as a food source.

Identification: Each holding tank should be properly labeled with an individual cage card that includes animal identification, project Investigator name and approved protocol number.

Facilities:

Floors should be moisture-resistant, nonabsorbent, impact-resistant, and relatively smooth. After all animals leave the facility anything that was used to house the animals must be disinfected prior to a new group of dragons coming into the facility.

Temperature, Humidity and Illumination:

Heating and air in Bearded Dragon rooms should be controlled in a manner that supports species specific needs. Cage temperatures should typically be maintained between (78-102 °F), but the temperature may vary when mimicking seasonal variation is required, for example for breeding. Humidity at the room level does not directly impact the lizards however high levels of humidity can be detrimental to electronic equipment. Regular monitoring of the HVAC system is important and is best performed at the room level. Illumination schedules should be limited to a duration that will not compromise the well-being of the species being housed. Bearded Dragons should be provided UVB and heat bulbs on a 10 hour on/14 hour off cycle.

Caging:

Tanks or primary enclosure should be constructed of non-porous material that can be cleaned and disinfected regularly and allow for daily observation of the animals. Tanks or primary enclosure must provide a safe environment that is not constructed with material that may cause injury to the animal. Bearded Dragons should be housed so primary enclosure requirements meets the general needs of individual or group maintained animals. This should be based on species needs, behavior, and goals of the study.