Horned Mountain Dragon Care Sheet

Introduction

Horned Mountain Dragons, also known as **Ceratophora**, are unique lizards found in the mountainous regions of Sri Lanka and India. They are known for their cool horn-like structures on their heads and their bright colors! Taking care of a Horned Mountain Dragon can be fun, but it requires proper knowledge and attention. Here's how to keep your dragon healthy and happy!

Habitat

Enclosure

- **Size**: A good-sized terrarium for one dragon should be at least **20 gallons**. Bigger is always better!
- **Type**: Use a tall enclosure since these lizards love to climb. A screen top is great for ventilation.
- **Substrate**: Use a mix of coconut fiber and soil to mimic their natural environment. This helps with humidity and allows them to burrow.

Temperature and Lighting

- **Heat**: Keep the temperature between **75°F and 85°F** during the day. Provide a basking spot of about **90°F**. Use a heat lamp or ceramic heater.
- **Cool Area**: Make sure there's a cooler area (around **70°F**) for your dragon to retreat to.
- **UVB Light**: Use a UVB light to help your dragon absorb calcium. This is crucial for their health. The light should be on for about **12-14 hours a day**.

Diet

Horned Mountain Dragons are insectivores, which means they primarily eat insects. Here's what you should feed them:

- **Live Insects**: Offer crickets, mealworms, and roaches. Make sure they're the right size—no bigger than the space between your dragon's eyes!
- **Gut Loading**: Before feeding insects, feed them nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables. This way, your dragon gets extra vitamins!
- **Calcium Dust**: Dust the insects with calcium powder a few times a week to help your dragon grow strong bones.

Water

- **Drinking**: Provide a shallow dish of fresh water. They may also enjoy light misting. Use a spray bottle to gently mist their habitat every day, which helps maintain humidity.

Handling and Socialization

- **Gentle Touch**: When you pick up your dragon, do so gently. Support their body and avoid grabbing them by the tail.
- **Short Sessions**: Keep handling sessions short at first—about 10-15 minutes—until they get used to you. Watch for signs of stress, like puffing up or trying to escape.

Health and Behavior

Signs of a Healthy Dragon

- **Active and Alert**: A healthy Horned Mountain Dragon is curious and active. They should enjoy exploring their enclosure.
- **Eating Well**: Make sure they have a good appetite. If they refuse food for more than a few days, consult a vet.
- **Clear Eyes and Skin**: Their eyes should be bright and clear. Look out for any unusual changes in their skin, such as discoloration or shedding problems.

Common Health Issues

- **Respiratory Issues**: If your dragon is coughing or has trouble breathing, it needs a vet's help.
- **Parasites**: If you notice weight loss or lethargy, your dragon might have parasites. A vet can help with this too.

Exercise and Enrichment

- **Climbing**: Provide branches and logs for your dragon to climb on. They love to explore vertical spaces!
- **Hiding Spots**: Include caves or small hideouts made from rocks or plants. This gives them a safe space to retreat when they feel stressed.
- **Plants**: Add live or artificial plants to create a more natural environment and provide places to explore.

Cleaning the Habitat

- **Spot Cleaning**: Remove any waste daily to keep the enclosure clean.
- **Deep Cleaning**: Every few weeks, take everything out, clean the enclosure with a reptile-safe cleaner, and replace the substrate.

Conclusion

Caring for a Horned Mountain Dragon is a rewarding experience. They have unique personalities and can become great companions with proper care. By following these guidelines, you can help your dragon thrive in a healthy environment. Always remember to ask an adult for help if you have questions or need assistance.

Enjoy your journey with your Horned Mountain Dragon, and have fun watching them explore and grow!

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