

## Frilled Lizard

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



Also known as the Frill-necked Lizard, the Frilled Lizard is a fascinating, unique reptile. They are curious animals that have distinct personalities. Though they make very interesting pets, they are not for beginners.

### Species Profile: Frilled Lizard

**Scientific Name:** *Chlamydosaurus kingii*

**Natural Environment:** Forests and savannahs of Western and Northern Australia

**Average Size:** 3 feet

**Average Life Span:** Up to 20 years

**Appearance:** The Frilled Lizard has a large mouth, grayish brown scaly skin, long limbs, and a long tail. The mouth lining and tongue are pink or yellow. The exact color of the skin will vary by region, as the color matches its habitat. The tail is striped with a dark grey tip.



The Frilled Lizard gets its name from a scaly frill that is folded against the back of its neck and head. When frightened or angry, the frill will become erect, and it can measure up to 12" in diameter. When closed, the frill is

the same color of the body, but when open, the inside surface is a brilliant red or orange color.

**Habitat**

**Size:** Frilled Lizards are very active, so a minimum cage size for a single adult should be no less than 4 feet high by 3 feet long. Custom-built enclosures work best.

**Lighting:** Frilled Lizards require [UVA and UVB light](#) as well as a [basking lamp](#). They require a normal photoperiod of 12 hours light followed by 12 hours of darkness.

**Temperature:** The proper temperature range for a Frilled Lizard is 95° to 100° F in the basking area and 75° to 80° F in the cooler end of the enclosure. Heating products you can use include heat lamps, [under tank heaters](#), and mercury vapor bulbs. You will need to use night [heat lamps](#) or ceramic heat emitters at night if your house gets cool. Monitor temperature with a [thermometer](#).

**Humidity:** Frilled Lizards require 50% to 70% humidity. To maintain this, use a [mister](#) as needed and place a large bowl of water in the habitat. Monitor humidity with a [hygrometer](#).

**Housing:** Because Frilled Lizards are arboreal and spend 90% of their time in trees, you will need a tall enclosure. Place lots of trunks and branches with a rough texture in the habitat for climbing and basking. Be sure to provide plenty of hiding spots using artificial plants and commercial hides.

**Substrate:** Sand works well for adults, but juveniles may accidentally ingest it, so you should use paper substrate when your lizard is younger.

**Diet/Feeding:** Frilled Lizards are carnivores that live mainly on insects such as [live crickets](#) and mealworms. You can also feed them the occasional pinky mouse. Juveniles and hatchlings should be fed twice a day, and adults should be fed once a day. All insects should be gutloaded, and all food should be dusted with a calcium supplement. Use the supplement every day for juveniles and every other day for adults. Feed them shortly after they wake up or a couple hours before their inactive night period.

**Behavior/Interaction:** Frilled Lizards are diurnal and very active. They are highly territorial, and two males should never be housed together. They are arboreal, and will spend most of their time in trees, coming down only to feed.

When you handle your frilled lizard, support most of its body weight in your hand, allowing it to grasp your arm as it would a tree branch or trunk. Handling them from a young age will help them to become more outgoing and open to interaction with you.

**Interesting Facts:** These lizards may also use their frill for thermoregulation. Frilled Lizards can stand and run on their two hind legs when they feel threatened or need to escape a predator. They use camouflage to hide on trees.