

GECKODAILY CLASSROOM RESOURCES · WORKSHEET

Bearded Dragon - Adaptations & Physiology

Pogona vitticeps

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Answer each question in complete sentences, using the matching Bearded Dragon Species Fact Sheet as your reference. An answer key follows on the last page.

1. Give the full scientific (binomial) name of the bearded dragon, and its native continent.
2. Unlike the four gecko species covered elsewhere in this set, the bearded dragon is diurnal and heliothermic. Define both terms.
3. Describe the bearded dragon's 'beard' display and one situation in which it is used.
4. Bearded dragons normally use ZZ/ZW sex chromosomes to determine sex. Describe the unusual finding researchers made about incubation temperature in this species.
5. Explain how colour change helps a bearded dragon manage its body temperature.
6. Why are essentially all bearded dragons available in the pet trade worldwide captive-bred rather than wild-caught?

GECKODAILY CLASSROOM RESOURCES · ANSWER KEY

Bearded Dragon - Adaptations & Physiology

1. Give the full scientific (binomial) name of the bearded dragon, and its native continent.

Pogona vitticeps; native to Australia.

2. Unlike the four gecko species covered elsewhere in this set, the bearded dragon is diurnal and heliothermic. Define both terms.

Diurnal means active mainly during daylight hours. Heliothermic means regulating body temperature primarily by basking in direct sunlight.

3. Describe the bearded dragon's 'beard' display and one situation in which it is used.

A pouch of skin under the throat, covered in spiny scales, can be inflated and turned black. It is used in territorial and courtship displays.

4. Bearded dragons normally use ZZ/ZW sex chromosomes to determine sex. Describe the unusual finding researchers made about incubation temperature in this species.

At sufficiently high incubation temperatures, genetically male (ZZ) embryos can develop as females anyway - temperature overriding the expected chromosomal sex determination.

5. Explain how colour change helps a bearded dragon manage its body temperature.

As an ectotherm, it cannot generate much heat internally, so darkening its skin lets it absorb more solar heat, while lightening reduces heat absorption - a behavioural/physiological form of thermoregulation.

6. Why are essentially all bearded dragons available in the pet trade worldwide captive-bred rather than wild-caught?

Australia has banned the export of native wildlife (including bearded dragons) since the 1960s, so all animals in the trade outside Australia descend from captive-bred stock.