herpy

MONITOR LIZARDS

Perentie

Varanus giganteus

Varanus giganteus is Australia's largest lizard: a slender, long-necked desert monitor of up to 250 cm with a pale, net-patterned head and transverse rows of large, pale spots on the back. It is fast, diurnal and feeds on reptiles, mammals and carrion. Little is known about its care. The species needs an entire room, intense heat and UVB, and can bite hard and lash with its tail.

Family: Varanidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**150-250 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Rock-dwelling, terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert, semi-desert and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**500 × 200 × 200 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-35 °C**
Basking spot	**50-58 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**30-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**5-17 eggs**
Incubation	**180-190 days** at 28-31 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little is known about the care of *Varanus giganteus*. Care is based on other large Australian ground monitors such as *Varanus gouldii* and *Varanus panoptes*, which have similar requirements.
TEMPERATURE	*Varanus giganteus* comes from a hot, dry climate and needs a large temperature gradient. The figures for temperature and humidity are borrowed from *Varanus gouldii*.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be 30-60 %, and ventilation should be good, so that the air stays dry and the substrate does not go mouldy.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Varanus giganteus* is diurnal and basks in open sun, so it needs strong light and UVB. UVB is necessary for the animal to produce vitamin D3, absorb calcium and avoid bone disease.
FEEDING	In the wild, adults eat mostly reptiles, including other monitors, and mammals such as rodents, marsupials and young kangaroos, to a lesser extent birds and eggs, and they also take carrion.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Varanus giganteus* is large, strong and fast. A bite causes deep wounds, swelling within a few minutes, bleeding that is difficult to stop, and pain for several hours. The tail is used as a whip, and the claws are long and sharp.
NATIVE RANGE	Australia.