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MONITOR LIZARDS

Sand Monitor

Varanus gouldii

Varanus gouldii is a large, diurnal ground-dwelling monitor from most of Australia and southern Papua New Guinea. It digs, runs fast and eats almost anything it can overpower. The species is hardy in captivity, but it grows to nearly 160 cm, so it needs a home-built enclosure or a whole room, powerful heat and a keeper with experience of large monitors.

Family: Varanidae Former name: *Varanus gouldii flavirufus; Varanus flavirufus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**100-160 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**2,000-6,000 g**
Lifespan	**10-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert, semi-desert and savanna**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**300 × 150 × 150 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	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**5-17 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
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	An adult needs far more than an ordinary commercial enclosure: a home-built enclosure or a room of at least 300 × 150 × 150 cm (length × width × height) for one animal.
TEMPERATURE	*Varanus gouldii* loves sun and needs a large temperature gradient. By day the cool part of the enclosure must be 25-28 °C, and the air just under the lamps at the hot end must reach about 47 °C in adults.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The species comes from dry, hot regions. Keep humidity at 30-60 % and ensure good ventilation. The most important thing is that the substrate is slightly damp in depth, so that the burrows hold, while the surface is dry.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	Place a large, heavy and low water container at the cool end, so that the animal cannot tip it over, and change the water daily. The animal drinks from it, and large animals may lie in it to cool down.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Varanus gouldii* is diurnal and lives in full sun.
FEEDING	*Varanus gouldii* eats anything it can overpower, and the diet must be varied and consist of whole prey.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	Safety: *Varanus gouldii* is large, fast and alert. If it feels threatened, it can rise up, puff itself up, hiss and lash its tail.
NATIVE RANGE	Australia and Papua New Guinea.