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MONITOR LIZARDS

Lace Monitor

Varanus varius

Varanus varius is a powerful, diurnal climbing monitor from eastern Australia. It grows to about 2 m including the tail, is the closest living relative of *V. komodoensis* and as an adult needs a whole room or a large outdoor enclosure. It is not an animal for beginners, and only little detailed care information exists.

Family: Varanidae

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**100-200 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**3,000-14,000 g**
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Savanna and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**400 × 200 × 200 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**28-35 °C**
Basking spot	**45-60 °C**
Temperature, night	**18-24 °C**
Humidity	**40-70%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**24-60 months**
Clutch size	**4-14 eggs**
Incubation	**180-270 days** at 29-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

One adult needs an enclosure of at least 400 × 200 × 200 cm (length × width × height). The enclosure must be at least twice as long and as wide as the animal, and the largest animals reach about 2 m.

TEMPERATURE

Varanus varius is diurnal and basks a lot. The basking spot must be a large, warm surface where the surface reaches 45-60 °C. This is a surface temperature measured with an IR thermometer, not air temperature.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The species does not require high humidity, and 40-70 % is a reasonable starting point (an estimate, not documented for captivity). The enclosure must have both dry areas and a more humid corner so that shedding goes easily.

LIGHTING AND UVB

As a diurnal species that basks a lot, *Varanus varius* needs strong light and UVB.

FEEDING

In the wild the species eats mainly mammals and carrion and also insects, reptiles, birds and eggs. Detailed feeding plans for captivity are not documented for the species, so the main rule is borrowed from other large monitors.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Safety: *Varanus varius* is strong and fast and can bite, scratch and lash with its tail. The teeth are long and sharp, and a bite can cause deep wounds that bleed heavily, swell and hurt for hours.

NATIVE RANGE

Australia.