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MONITOR LIZARDS

White-throated Monitor

Varanus albigularis

Varanus albigularis is a powerful, diurnal monitor that loves to dig, from savannas and dry woodland in southern and eastern Africa. It grows to 100-200 cm, is inquisitive and can become very tame, but it needs a room rather than an enclosure, a large food bill and many years of careful husbandry.

Family: Varanidae Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**100-200 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**3,000-12,000 g**
Lifespan	**10-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and savanna**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**300 × 200 × 150 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-26 °C**
Basking spot	**35-45 °C**
Temperature, night	**19-21 °C**
Humidity	**30-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**16-65 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
Incubation	**150-180 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 *Varanus albigularis* needs at least 300 × 200 × 150 cm (length × width × height) and preferably a whole room. The size suits adults of 130-200 cm.

TEMPERATURE

As a diurnal sun-basker, *Varanus albigularis* requires a large temperature gradient. The air temperature is 24-26 °C by day and 19-21 °C at night. The basking spot must be a large, open area with a warm surface of 35-45 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

The species comes from dry to semi-humid savanna country, and the right humidity in the setup is not documented with figures.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Varanus albigularis is a diurnal sun-basker and needs strong light.

FEEDING

In the wild *Varanus albigularis* is a true generalist. It eats snails, grasshoppers, millipedes, beetles and other invertebrates and occasionally snakes.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Varanus albigularis is not a pet in the usual sense. Wild animals are shy and flee or bite if they are caught, and even tame animals have strong jaws, sharp claws and a tail that can lash.

NATIVE RANGE

Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia, Eswatini, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Congo - Kinshasa.