herpy

MONITOR LIZARDS

Black Tree Monitor

Varanus beccarii

A small, black, arboreal monitor from the Aru Islands off New Guinea with a prehensile tail and unusually long forelimbs, which it uses like hands when hunting. The animal is nervous, needs a tall, warm enclosure with high humidity and is difficult to breed, so it is only suitable for an experienced keeper.

Family: Varanidae Former name: *Varanus prasinus beccarii; Monitor beccarii* Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**80-120 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**220-300 g**
Lifespan	**10-17 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest and wetland**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**150 × 100 × 150 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-30 °C**
Basking spot	**35-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-24 °C**
Humidity	**55-70%**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**3 eggs**
Incubation	**157-203 days** at 29-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Data Deficient (DD)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult needs a tall enclosure of at least 150 × 100 × 150 cm (length × width × height), and larger is better.
TEMPERATURE	The daytime temperature in the enclosure should be around 26-30 °C, but may range from 24 to 35 °C across the enclosure. Under a heat lamp there must be a basking spot of 35-40 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The humidity in captivity is mostly 55-70 %, with swings over the day. Mist the substrate daily with fresh water so that the humidity rises, and let it dry out a little again during the day.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Varanus beccarii* is diurnal and should have UVB light. Documented set-ups use a combined heat and UVB lamp of 100-160 W above the basking spot, in some cases supplemented with filtered daylight.
FEEDING	The species lives mostly on live insects. Documented food for adults is cockroaches (e.g. *Blaptica dubia*), supplemented with mealworms, superworms (*Zophobas morio*), crickets and rose chafer larvae (*Pachnoda*).
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Varanus beccarii* is nervous and easily stressed by handling. Bites and claws are a real risk: the teeth are long, the claws sharp, and a frightened animal can also kick and defecate on the person holding it.
NATIVE RANGE	Indonesia.

The full guide with map and updates: herpy.org/varaner/varanus-beccarii