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MONITOR LIZARDS

Line-tailed Pygmy Monitor

Varanus caudolineatus

Varanus caudolineatus is one of the smallest monitors in the world: a diurnal, semi-arboreal pygmy monitor of 25-32 cm from the dry scrubland of Western Australia. It lives in crevices under loose bark and in hollow trees, feeds on insects and small lizards and is rare in captivity. The species has been bred in captivity, but husbandry knowledge is sparse, and part of the guidance is based on related pygmy monitors.

Family: Varanidae Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**25-32 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**8-12 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**80 × 50 × 100 cm** L × W × H for 2 adults
Temperature, day	**28-34 °C**
Basking spot	**45-55 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**30-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**3-6 eggs**
Clutches per year	**2-4**
Incubation	**77 days** at 29-31 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

The dimensions for *Varanus caudolineatus* are borrowed from the arboreal pygmy monitors *Varanus similis* and *Varanus gilleni* and scaled down because the species is smaller.

TEMPERATURE

Varanus caudolineatus is active when the air is 30-45 °C, so the enclosure must allow for high temperatures. The figures below are a cautious estimate based on related pygmy monitors. Background by day: 28-34 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Varanus caudolineatus comes from arid regions in Western Australia, and the humidity in the enclosure should be about 30-60 %, with a damper corner at the bottom of the substrate and drier air at the basking spot.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Varanus caudolineatus is diurnal and basks in the heat, so it does best with strong light and UVB.

FEEDING

In the wild *Varanus caudolineatus* lives mostly on arthropods: cockroaches, grasshoppers and other insects, spiders and scorpions, and more rarely centipedes, beetles, cicadas and moths.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Varanus caudolineatus is so small that bites and claws are unlikely to cause serious injury, but the animal can both bite and scratch, so handling should be calm and brief. Tail whipping is hardly a problem at this size.

NATIVE RANGE

Australia.