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MONITOR LIZARDS

## Cuming's water monitor

# *Varanus cumingi*

*Varanus cumingi* is a large, yellow and black water monitor from Mindanao and the nearest islands in the southern Philippines, formerly regarded as a subspecies of *Varanus salvator*. Much of its care is borrowed from related water monitors.

Family: Varanidae  Former name: *Varanus salvator cumingi*  Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

### THE ANIMAL

| | |
|---|---|
| Adult size | **100-150 cm**<br>total length incl. tail |
| Lifespan | **15-20 years** |
| Active | **By day** |
| Lifestyle | **Arboreal, terrestrial and semi-aquatic** |
| Habitat | **Rainforest and wetland** |
| Difficulty | **Expert** |

### CARE

| | |
|---|---|
| Min. enclosure | **300 × 150 × 150 cm**<br>L × W × H for 1 adult |
| Temperature, day | **27-32 °C** |
| Basking spot | **52-60 °C** |
| Temperature, night | **21-24 °C** |
| Humidity | **60-70%** |
| Water | **Water section**<br>depth 35-50 cm |
| UVB | **Essential**<br>Ferguson zone 3 |
| Diet | **Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails** |
| Kept | **Singly** |

### BREEDING

| | |
|---|---|
| Reproduction | **Egg-laying** |
| Sexually mature | **24 months** |
| Clutch size | **5-10 eggs** |
| Clutches per year | **1-3** |
| Incubation | **187-220 days**<br>at 27-31.5 °C |

### PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

## Care at a glance

**THE ENCLOSURE**

An adult *Varanus cumingi* of about 150 cm needs a home-built terrarium or a whole room of at least 300 × 150 × 150 cm (length × width × height), and larger is better.

**TEMPERATURE**

*Varanus cumingi* needs a background temperature of 27-32 °C during the day. The figures are borrowed from *Varanus salvator*.

**HUMIDITY AND WATER**

Humidity should be 60-70 %; the figure is borrowed from *Varanus salvator*. A large water basin in itself keeps humidity up, and a moist, deep substrate gives the animal a place to retreat to.

**WATER AND WATER QUALITY**

The species is tied to water, so a large water section is not optional. It must be large enough for the whole animal to lie submerged and swim, and the depth should be 35-50 cm for an adult.

**LIGHTING AND UVB**

The species is diurnal and basks, so strong light and UVB are necessary. Treat it as a species for Ferguson zone 3, like other diurnal monitors that bask a lot.

**FEEDING**

In the wild *Varanus cumingi* eats many kinds of animals and carrion. The feeding below is borrowed from *Varanus salvator*.

**BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING**

*Varanus cumingi* is large and powerful, and even a medium-sized monitor has sharp teeth, strong claws and a powerful tail that it can whip with. A bite can cause deep wounds, and the claws can tear the skin open.

**NATIVE RANGE**

Philippines.