herpy

MONITOR LIZARDS

Mangrove Monitor

Varanus indicus

Varanus indicus is an active, diurnal monitor of 100-120 cm from the coasts and mangrove swamps of the Moluccas. It climbs, digs and swims, and needs a home-built enclosure of several square metres, plenty of heat and a diet of whole prey. The species is an obvious but demanding monitor for the experienced keeper.

Family: Varanidae Former name: *Tupinambis indicus; Varanus guttatus; Varanus cerambonensis* Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**100-120 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal, terrestrial and semi-aquatic**
Habitat	**Rainforest and wetland**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**250 × 120 × 180 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**28-32 °C**
Basking spot	**40-45 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-26 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water section** depth 45-60 cm
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**2-12 eggs**
Incubation	**210-240 days** at 26.5-29.5 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	As an adult, *Varanus indicus* needs a large, home-built enclosure or a whole room. The minimum for one animal is 250 × 120 × 180 cm (length × width × height), and bigger is better. Ready-made enclosures in the trade are too small.
TEMPERATURE	The species needs a large temperature gradient. The daytime background temperature should be 28-32 °C, and the basking spot should be markedly warmer.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The humidity should be 60-80 %, which is easy to achieve with a large water section, moist substrate and daily misting. Let the surface of the substrate dry out a little between mistings so that it does not turn sour.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	The species swims a lot and often empties its bowels in the water. A water section of at least a third of the floor and 45-60 cm deep is a reasonable minimum.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and needs UVB. Use powerful T5 tubes in Ferguson zone 3, possibly combined with a mercury vapour lamp that gives both heat and UV. Replace the tubes every 6-12 months, even if they still light up.
FEEDING	*Varanus indicus* is a carnivore and must be given whole prey. Good food types are whole fish, prawns or crayfish, mice and small rats, whole chicks or quail, and larger insects such as grasshoppers and cockroaches.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	The species is wary and can become tame if handled calmly and regularly as a juvenile. Captive-bred animals usually become calm, whereas wild-caught animals often remain defensive.
NATIVE RANGE	Indonesia.

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