herpy

MONITOR LIZARDS

Banggai Island monitor

Varanus melinus

Varanus melinus is a medium-sized, yellow monitor from the Sula Islands in Indonesia. Adults are intensely yellow, and the juveniles are black with yellow spots. The species needs a large enclosure with a pool and very warm basking spots, feeds on insects and vertebrates, and is threatened in the wild, so it suits only an experienced keeper.

Family: Varanidae Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**90-130 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**8-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**300 × 120 × 150 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-33 °C**
Basking spot	**40-45 °C**
Temperature, night	**24-26 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
Water	**Water section** depth 80 cm
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**2-12 eggs**
Incubation	**164-171 days** at 28-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Endangered (EN)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	A single adult needs at least 300 × 120 × 150 cm (length × width × height), and bigger is better. A pair needs about 400 × 100 × 150 cm that can be divided into two equal halves so the animals can be separated.
TEMPERATURE	The background temperature in the enclosure is 26-33 °C during the day, and the basking spot under the heat lamps should reach 40-45 °C, measured as surface temperature with an IR thermometer.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be high, about 60-80 % as in related species in the group that includes *V. indicus*. Mist the juveniles daily with rainwater; the pool also adds to the humidity.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and basks a lot. Provide UVB from fluorescent tubes or heat lamps with UVB, so that the animal can choose its dose (Ferguson zone 3).
FEEDING	The species is carnivorous. Adults get vertebrates (mice, fish or chicken meat) once a week and insects, especially locusts and crickets, in between.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	Adults of this size have teeth and claws that can cause deep wounds, and the tail is compressed and can be used to whip. How powerful the bite and tail whip are in this particular species is not documented.
NATIVE RANGE	Indonesia.

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