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MONITOR LIZARDS

## Northern Blunt-spined Monitor

# *Varanus primordius*

A small, diurnal ground monitor from the tropical northern part of the Northern Territory in Australia. *Varanus primordius* digs and basks in intense heat and lives on insects, small reptiles and their eggs. The species is rare in captivity, and there are few reliable care figures, so it is only for the experienced keeper.

Family: Varanidae  Former name: *Varanus acanthurus primordius; Worrellisaurus primordius*  Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

### THE ANIMAL

| | |
|---|---|
| Adult size | **30-46 cm**<br>total length incl. tail |
| Lifespan | **10-15 years** |
| Active | **By day** |
| Lifestyle | **Rock-dwelling, terrestrial and burrowing** |
| Habitat | **Savanna and rocky terrain** |
| Difficulty | **Experienced** |

### CARE

| | |
|---|---|
| Min. enclosure | **120 × 60 × 60 cm**<br>L × W × H for 1 adult |
| Temperature, day | **24-38 °C** |
| Basking spot | **55-65 °C** |
| Temperature, night | **22-26 °C** |
| Humidity | **20-50%** |
| UVB | **Essential**<br>Ferguson zone 3 |
| Diet | **Insects and vertebrates** |
| Kept | **Singly** |

### BREEDING

| | |
|---|---|
| Reproduction | **Egg-laying** |
| Sexually mature | **8-14 months** |
| Clutch size | **2-5 eggs** |
| Clutches per year | **1-5** |
| Incubation | **80-120 days**<br>at 28.5-30.5 °C |

### PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

## Care at a glance

**THE ENCLOSURE**

*Varanus primordius* is a small but very active ground-dwelling monitor. An adult animal needs at least 120 × 60 × 60 cm (length × width × height), preferably larger, and a home-built terrarium with front doors is often the best.

**TEMPERATURE**

*V. primordius* is a sun-seeking animal and needs a lot of heat. Measure the surface temperature at the basking spot with an IR thermometer, not the air. Figures for this particular species are not documented.

**HUMIDITY AND WATER**

The air must be dry. The figure is borrowed from the closely related *V. acanthurus*, which is kept at 20-50 % relative humidity. More important than the air is the humidity of the substrate.

**LIGHTING AND UVB**

Diurnal, sun-seeking monitors need strong UVB light. Use a powerful UVB tube or a metal halide lamp in a reflector fitting, mounted at a safe distance from the basking spot, and count on Ferguson zone 3.

**FEEDING**

*Varanus primordius* lives in the wild on insects, small reptiles and reptile eggs.

**BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING**

*V. primordius* is small, so bites and claws are rarely serious, but small monitors can still cause lacerations that bleed.

**NATIVE RANGE**

Australia.