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MONITOR LIZARDS

Roughneck Monitor

Varanus rudicollis

Varanus rudicollis is a dark, long-necked monitor from the forests and swamps of South-East Asia, named after the strongly keeled scales on the nape. It climbs as willingly as it walks on the ground, and it needs a large, warm and very humid enclosure. Only a little brief care information exists for the species, so it suits only an experienced keeper who is prepared to find their own way.

Family: Varanidae Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**90-130 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest and wetland**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**210 × 90 × 180 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**28-32 °C**
Basking spot	**35-60 °C**
Temperature, night	**21-29 °C**
Humidity	**80-95%**
Water	**Water section**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects, vertebrates and worms/snails**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**4-23 eggs**
Incubation	**163-234 days** at 24-30 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Data Deficient (DD)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	An adult needs a large, tall enclosure of at least 210 cm in length, 90 cm in width and 180 cm in height. Bigger is better, and best of all is a whole room or a custom-built aviary.
TEMPERATURE	The few figures given for the species are far from agreeing, and there are no measurements from the wild. The background temperature by day should be 28-32 °C, and about 30 °C away from the basking spot.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity is crucial to the health of the species. The relative humidity should be at least 80 %.
WATER AND WATER QUALITY	*Varanus rudicollis* lives by streams, in swamps and in mangroves and swims well, so it needs a large water container that it can lie fully submerged in. The water is changed daily, because the animal often passes droppings in it.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species needs UVB and a basking spot. UV light for 10 hours a day together with heat bulbs works well.
FEEDING	What *Varanus rudicollis* eats in the wild is poorly known. The food that has been recorded is insects and other invertebrates as well as amphibians, and crabs seem to be included where they are plentiful.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	Safety: *Varanus rudicollis* has needle-sharp claws, strong jaws and a tail that can lash.
NATIVE RANGE	Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.