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MONITOR LIZARDS

Crocodile Monitor

Varanus salvadorii

Varanus salvadorii is an arboreal monitor of up to about 250 cm in length from the rainforests of New Guinea, with a tail at least twice as long as the head and body, and a space requirement the size of a room.

Family: Varanidae Published 15 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**150-250 cm** total length incl. tail
Weight	**2,500-6,000 g**
Lifespan	**15-25 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Rainforest**
Difficulty	**Expert**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**300 × 150 × 200 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**28-32 °C**
Basking spot	**35-40 °C**
Temperature, night	**24-26 °C**
Humidity	**70-90%**
Water	**Water section** depth 30-50 cm
UVB	**Essential** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Insects and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**24-60 months**
Clutch size	**4-12 eggs**
Clutches per year	**1-2**
Incubation	**155-251 days** at 28-30.5 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Size is the first requirement that decides whether the species can be kept responsibly.
TEMPERATURE	*Varanus salvadorii* is tropical and diurnal and needs a large temperature gradient from about 26 °C at the cool end to basking spots of 35-40 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	The species requires high humidity, 70-90 % at all times, and at the same time good ventilation so that bacteria and fungus do not take hold.
LIGHTING AND UVB	The species is diurnal and basks in the upper layers of the forest. Unfiltered sunlight is best; indoors the roof should let UV through, and it should always be supplemented with powerful lamps that provide both UVB and heat.
FEEDING	*Varanus salvadorii* is a predator, and in the wild birds seem to be the main food, supplemented with small mammals, eggs, insects and lizards.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Varanus salvadorii* is typically nervous and shy and avoids contact with people, and some animals react aggressively. Each animal has its own character.
NATIVE RANGE	Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.