herpy

MONITOR LIZARDS

Banded Tree Monitor

Varanus scalaris

A small, slender tree monitor from the savanna woodlands of northern Australia that basks on trunks and ambushes insects from a hiding place in a hollow branch. The species is rare in captivity, and many of the husbandry figures are borrowed from its closest relative.

Family: Varanidae Former name: *Varanus timorensis scalaris* Published 16 November 2026

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**45-59 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**10-15 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal**
Habitat	**Savanna**
Difficulty	**Experienced**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**80 × 80 × 130 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**25-30 °C**
Basking spot	**40-45 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-25 °C**
Humidity	**60-80%**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 3
Diet	**Insects and vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly or in pairs**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**24 months**
Clutch size	**3-18 eggs**
Incubation	**120-136 days** at 28-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	The dimensions for *Varanus scalaris* are borrowed from *V. similis*, a closely related tree monitor of the same size.
TEMPERATURE	The air in the enclosure for *Varanus scalaris* should be about 30 °C in the upper parts and 25 °C down at the bottom.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	For *Varanus scalaris*, a daily spraying in the evening gives a suitable humidity of 60-80 %. Spray less in periods when the animals are less active and more hidden, and more again in the following rainy period.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Varanus scalaris* is diurnal and basks, so it needs a bright, warm basking spot and UVB.
FEEDING	In the wild *Varanus scalaris* takes insects and other invertebrates, but also small vertebrates.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	Safety first: all monitors can bite, and they have claws.
NATIVE RANGE	Australia.

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