herpy

MONITOR LIZARDS

## Spotted Tree Monitor

# *Varanus similis*

*Varanus similis* is a small, diurnal tree monitor from northern Australia and New Guinea. It is kept in a tall enclosure with cork, hides and a warm basking spot, lives on feeder insects and is a rare, tree-dwelling alternative to the ground-dwelling small monitors. Experience with its care is limited, though.

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

KEY FACTS

### THE ANIMAL

| | |
|---|---|
| Adult size | **45-60 cm** total length incl. tail |
| Lifespan | **8-12 years** |
| Active | **By day** |
| Lifestyle | **Arboreal** |
| Habitat | **Savanna and dry forest** |
| Difficulty | **Intermediate** |

### CARE

| | |
|---|---|
| Min. enclosure | **80 × 80 × 130 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult |
| Temperature, day | **25-30 °C** |
| Basking spot | **40-42 °C** |
| Temperature, night | **22-25 °C** |
| Humidity | **60-80%** |
| UVB | **Recommended** Ferguson zone 3 |
| Diet | **Insects** |
| 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 | An adult needs a tall enclosure of at least 80 × 80 × 130 cm (length × width × height). For a pair, 100 × 100 × 200 cm is ample but not excessive. As the species is arboreal, height counts for more than floor area. |
| TEMPERATURE | The daytime temperature in the enclosure is 25-30 °C, with 30 °C in the upper parts and 25 °C down at the bottom. The basking spot is a branch or stone under a spotlight that gives a local surface temperature of about 40 °C. |
| HUMIDITY AND WATER | Relative humidity is kept at 60-80 %. This is achieved by misting the enclosure with water in the evening and letting the substrate hold moisture, possibly with a weak heating cable under the floor. |
| LIGHTING AND UVB | The species is diurnal and needs bright light and UVB. Over the basking spot a 150 W HQI floodlight of daylight quality (5000 K) can be combined with a 150 W halogen spotlight. |
| FEEDING | The animals take all common feeder insects and are not fussy. Cockroaches (*Blaptica dubia* and *Blaberus atropus*) of a suitable size make a good staple, and locusts are a popular change. |
| BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING | Wild-caught animals are shy at first, but that is natural behaviour: the species flees or hides until the threat has passed, and hunts from ambush. It does not mean the species is especially timid. |
| NATIVE RANGE | Australia and Papua New Guinea. |

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