



Common name: Lace Monitor

Scientific name: *Varanus varius*

Biology and behaviour

Lace monitors have shredding type teeth and strong claws, they can grow to between 2 to 3 metres and can live for up to 20 years. They are semi arboreal species found mostly in trees. Lace monitors are found in two broad forms. The main form is dark grey to dull blueish black with numerous scattered cream spots. The snout is marked with prominent black and yellow bands extending under the chin and neck. The tail has narrow black and cream bands which are narrow and get wider towards the end of the tail. The other type, known as "Bells Form", is found in dryer parts of NSW and Queensland. It has simple broad black and yellow bands across the whole body and tail. These common terrestrial and often arboreal monitors are found in eastern Australia and range from Cape Victoria Bedford on Cape York Peninsula to south-eastern South Australia. They frequent both open and closed forests and forage over long distances (up to 3 km a day). They are mainly active from September to May, but are inactive in cooler weather and shelter in a tree hollow or under a fallen tree or large rock during cold weather.

Requirements

You require a basic wildlife licence issued by the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

Housing, temperature and lighting

Adults should be kept in a minimum ground dimension of 3m by 3m and have a height of at least 180cm above the ground. Juveniles can be happily kept in a minimum enclosure size of 120cm x 60cm x 60cm. Cage decoration should include many logs and branches suitable for climbing and hiding. Enclosure temperature should be around 30° C at the hot end and around 27°C at the cool end. For indoor enclosures a 5.0 reptile UV globe should be provided for around 8 hours per day as this helps with the absorption of calcium and the formation of bone structure.

Substrate

Bark, commercially cleaned sand, synthetic grass, Aspen, gravel, newspaper or butchers paper are all good clean substrates.

Water

Provide a water bowl large enough and deep enough for individuals to completely submerge in. Bathing is essential for shedding. Ensure water bowls are cleaned regularly - not only are they for bathing, they are also a source of drinking water.

Feeding

Lace monitors should be fed on rats and lean meats regularly and given fresh water daily.

Handling

Lace monitors as juveniles are very nervous around humans; it will take time and persistence to become comfortable being handled, as adults thick long gloves should be worn as they have very sharp claws that can cause deep lacerations. The best method for taming young lace monitors is leaving them alone and slowly start interacting with the monitor by offering food, gaining the monitors trust is crucial to taming your young lace monitor.