

# BIAWAK

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# On the Cover: *Varanus douarrha*

The individuals depicted on the cover and inset of this issue represent a recently redescribed species of monitor lizard, *Varanus douarrha* (Lesson, 1830), which originates from New Ireland, in the Bismark Archipelago of Papua New Guinea. Although originally discovered and described by René Lesson in 1830, the holotype was lost on its way to France when the ship it was traveling on became shipwrecked at the Cape of Good Hope. Since then, without a holotype for comparative studies, it has been assumed that the monitors on New Ireland represented *V. indicus* or *V. finschi*. Recent field investigations by Valter Weijola in New Ireland and the Bismark Archipelago and phylogenetic analyses of recently collected specimens have reaffirmed Lesson's original classification of this animal as a distinct species.

The *V. douarrha* depicted here were photographed by **Valter Weijola** on 17 July and 9 August 2012 near Fissoa on the northern coast of New Ireland. Both individuals were found basking in coconut groves close to the beach.

**Reference:** Weijola, V., F. Kraus, V. Vahtera, C. Lindqvist & S.C. Donnellan. 2017. Reinstatement of *Varanus douarrha* Lesson, 1830 as a valid species with comments on the zoogeography of monitor lizards (Squamata: Varanidae) in the Bismarck Archipelago, Papua New Guinea. *Australian Journal of Zoology* 64(6): 434–451.



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**INTERNATIONAL VARANID INTEREST GROUP**  
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The International Varanid Interest Group is a volunteer-based organization established to advance varanid research, conservation, and husbandry, and to promote scientific literacy among varanid enthusiasts. Membership to the IVIG is free, and open to anyone with an interest in monitor lizards and the advancement of varanid research. Membership includes subscription to *Biawak*, an international research journal of varanid biology and husbandry, and is available online through the IVIG website.