Volume 1 Number 7 21 October 1991

VaraNews

VaraNews is published by Varanix ©, the Varanid Information eXchange, dedicated to the responsible captive care of monitor lizards through education and the open exchange of all information pertaining to Varanidae.

General Info

Zhbed mihlud, late again! Once more, apologies are in order for the lateness of this newsletter. There are several reasons, but I won't waste space going into them (though habitat construction over the last 5 weekends has been a major time-burner). I would like to stress that the tardiness of VaraNews arrival is not due to a lack of interest . (Another way to look at the delay in receiving this issue is that the next one wil be less than 2 months away). A better effort will be made to get future issues out on a timely basis; early December is still the next publication date.

A few readers have sent in articles which will be appearing in upcoming issues. In addition to the regular presentations of habitat design tips and general husbandry items, you can look forward to discussions of subcutaneous absesses in savannah monitors, a successful bout against giardia in *V. niloticus* and a review of Soviet literature on *V. griseus caspius*.

Coffee cups: Late (too), but not forgotten

Sincerest apologies to those of you who sent in your money and are anxiously awaiting their delivery. (You may have noticed checks were not cashed until I had the cups in my hands). Supplemental apologies to those of you who were counting on the cups for raffle items, etc.

These items should not be far behind arrival of this newsletter. They were due back within the week of 21 October and will be (were) sent out as soon as received. The reason for the delay was that I was waiting for enough orders to help defray the $400+ upfront cost. Unfortunately, only a few of you who wrote to say you would be interested followed up by sending in money (which is why I didn't even bother despositing the checks).

Cups are $6.95 plus shipping & handling at $3.50 for the first cup and $1.50 S&H for each additional cup. The cups have the Varanix logo in black & green on one side and the following species "word-block" (larger in size) in green & black on the other.

komodoensismertensiprasinusvariusexanthematicuspanoptes
rudicollisindicusglauertisalvadoriikordensismitchelli
acanthurusprimordiusdumerilii flavescensrosenbergi
timorensisbrevicaudagigganteusglebopalmaspencerl
albigulariscaudolineatusniloticusolivaceusgriseus
tristiskingorumsemireemexgouldisalvatoreremiusgilleni
karlschmidtiocellatusnebulosustorribengalensispunctatus

To reiterate, 100% of the profit (when it gets to that point) will be used to fund the translation project of Mertens "Die Familie der Warane", which has the green light as far as copyright is concerned. The first 25 pages have been translated and are under review; the next batch awaits funding. More on this in VaraNews 1(8).

A number of people have expressed an interest in T-shirts. These will hopefully become available within the next few months.

Monitor Rescue Program (MRP)

Organization of this worthwhile program is advancing. A written charter/description is being drawn up and reviewed; it should accompany the next issue of VaraNews. (Those of you who previously volunteered to participate will also receive additional forms).

The purpose of having a written charter is to clearly define the goals and administration of the program, especially to other organizations who would like our assistance in placing unwanted varanids. To briefly reiterate, the goal of this volunteer-supported program is to permanently place unwanted varanids in

Thanks go to John Rivera for sharing his illustrations of The Great One, *Varanus komodoensis*. Keep 'em coming, John.

the hands of qualified keepers. MRP Contacts, in coordination with an MRP Administrator, will provide temporary housing for animals until a suitable home is found. A list of MRP Contacts will be posted in each issue of VaraNews.

Tips & Tricks

How are you dealing with the environmental necessities of captive care for your varanid? This is where your helpful hints on topics as food/feeding, heating, water systems, habitat design and maintenance will be shared with the readership.

Controlling Humidity

Environmental control of artificial habitats is part of everyday life for anyone maintaining reptiles in captivity. Ideally, we could go to the quikee mart on the corner and pick up fully-equipped reptile living quarters that, when assembled, would provide a varanid biosphere as identical to the natural habitat as technology allows... and cost under $100. Until that day, we're on our own.

This article describes a relatively inexpensive humidity control/ventilation system that is about as simple a do-it-yourself'er as possible. Excess humidity can be a problem when habitats contain "large bodies of water" relative to the size of the enclosure. The problem becomes more acute when the water is heated and circulating. Aquatic and semi-aquatic monitors, (e.g., *V. salvator*, *V. indicus*, *V. niloticus*) enjoy spending a good deal of time in water, especially as a preferred hiding spot. Whereas *V. salvator* and *V. indicus* are indigenous to a warm, humid climate, *V. niloticus* is found in less humid regions. Especially in the latter's case, excessive humidity must be avoided when setting up such a water system in the captive environment.

In my setup (a 120 gallon water tank in a 6 ft x 12 ft x 6.5 ft enclosure), the inside air temperature at night drops when the heating system [described in VaraNews 1(6):2-3] is off. Heated by a protected aquarium heater, the water temperature remains around 78F. On nights when the temperature outside the habitat drops too far below the inside temperature, this differential and high humidity can cause condensation to form on the inside walls of the habitat.

The problem was initially remedied by putting a couple of large vents near the top of the cage, allowing inside/outside temperatures to equalize. But when the heater came on in the morning, the vents had to be closed, else heat would escape too quickly. Of course, this wasted energy as the heater was effectively trying to heat the entire room until somebody closed the vents.

VaraNews is the newsletter of Varanix, the Varanid Information eXchange. Varanix was founded to promote responsible care of varanids in captivity through education and the open exchange of information.

A primary function of the eXchange is to build a collective knowledge base that will serve to improve our understanding of the family Varanidae. The goal of these efforts is to improve their chances of survival, both in captivity and in the wild.

Editorial submissions:

May be written, typed or in electronic form (preferred). Both PC and Mac diskettes are acceptable, in ASCII, MS Word, WordPerfect or RTF format.

Please indicate any special conditions of publication, such as withholding mention of name/organization or giving credit to a person or publication.

Back Issues:

To receive the issues listed below, send:
Number 0: $1, 1(1) thru 1(6): $1.50

Inquiries and Membership:

One-year membership in Varanix is:

- $10 US/year (USA)
- $12 US/year (foreign)

Members receive VaraNews, the newsletter of Varanix. VaraNews is published bi-monthly the beginning of every even-numbered month.

VaraNews is free to zoos upon request and to herp societies participating in a newsletter exchange program.

Address all inquiries & memberships to:

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Messages may also be left via computer & modem on:

- Herpetology Online Network - (215) 464-3562
  (Herp-Net is a US-based electronic forum which can be accessed at any modem speed. The caller pays only for the phone call. System operator: Mark Miller. Settings: N-8-1-F)
- CompuServe - send mail to user ID: 71320,721

Specify "monitor" or "varanid" as the keyword/ subject

Editorial Review Board: Frank Braun
Mark Bayless

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The humidity control system described below consists of 2 major components: an axial flow (aka 'whisper', or 'muffin') fan and a humidistat. An electric cord, some electrical connectors and nuts & bolts round out the list.

The fan, approximately 4 x 4 inches and 1 - 1 1/2 inches deep, is the type typically used to cool computer innards; by design the fan is very quiet. They wholesale for around $20 (based on a 1988 parts catalog). The humidistat I used looks like a standard wall thermostat; cost begins at around $20. (Interesting perhaps is the "core" of the humidstat: several strands of human hair under tension, which expand and contract with changes in humidity.)

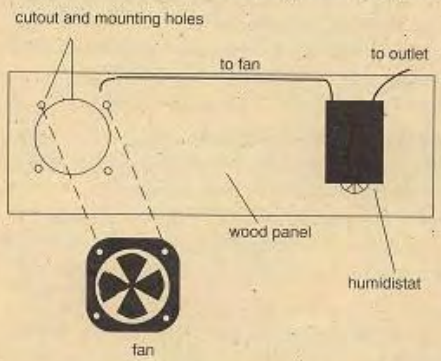
Mounting

The assembly, i.e. the fan and humidistat, is mounted near the top of the habitat on a side panel (1/4 inch plywood, 36 in x 12 in) atop a sheet of 1/4 inch plexglas, 4 ft x 4 ft. The water tank is also on this side of the habitat near the door, located 5 ft below the assembly, for easy access. This also allows humidity to be regulated closer to the source.

The humidistat is flush-mounted with a couple of screws inside the enclosure near the door. This is a straightforward operation. The fan is positioned on the opposite end of the panel. (It should not be mounted right next to the humidistat for the same reason a thermostat is not positioned over a heater.) For the fan, a few holes must be drilled: 4 small bolts holes to mount it and one just-under-4 inch diameter exhaust hole.

The fan is positioned and the panel is marked for the 4 bolts which will secure it. Once these are drilled, the exhaust hole can be cut, which will be just smaller in diameter than the square formed by the bolt holes. The fan is then bolted in place. Be certain the fan is mounted to 'exhaust' and not draw in air. An arrow on the side of the fan usually points the way.

All that remains is the wiring.This, too, is no complex task. Since the humidistat regulates operation of the fan, it must sit inline between the wall and the fan. Position the electric plug near the wall outlet and run it to the humidstat. (Hopefully, it is obvious that the cord should not be plugged in!) Depending on the type of connection in the humidistat, the wire is either cut and connected or stripped and spliced, continuing on to the fan.



Some fans have blade connectors, others simply have 2 wires running out. For those that do not, it is worth crimping some on to facilitate assembly/ disassembly in the future.

I have 6 of these fans which were acquired second hand for $2 - 5 each and will sell them for $13 (which includes $3 UPS shipment [3 lb]), the profit of which will be used for the Mertens translation project mentioned previously. If you are interested, please call, leaving a message if necessary.

Feeding Alternatives

As with many questions about captive varanid husbandry, "What alternatives are there to feeding rodents, either fresh-kill or frozen?" will elicit a range of responses.

The desire to find an adequate alternative may either be due to a lack of availability of rodents, the high cost of purchasing them by the baker's dozen, or simply not wanting to deal with whole animals as food. (As Frances Longmire put it: "I really don't feel like maintaining a food chain in my living room.") Keeping in mind that nutritional balance (e.g. calcium-to-phosphorus ratio) is important, the alternative food source dilemma is not easily resolved. (For those of you simply not wanting to deal with live rodents, many herp society newsletters have ads for frozen rats/mice mail-order in quantities of 50-100. Of course, this means commandeering freezer space.)

One possibility that has been suggested is Hill's Zu/Preem Feline Diet. The recommended feeding on Hill's Product Data sheet states: "Feline Diet is formulated to be fed as the sole ration for all non-domestic carnivores in the families felidae, canidae and hyaenidae. It's a complete balanced diet and no mixing, grinding, weighing of portions, or supplementation of vitamins or minerals is required."

In addition to felines, special diets are prepared for marmosets (also used at zoos for iguanas), primates, and omnivores.

The feline diet comes in a case of 24 - 14 oz. cans. Purchased at my vet, the price of a case was $33.80

plus tax. This comes out to about $1.60 per pound. The best deal I get on live rats is $1.75 for a "quarter-pounder"... and that's a pretty good deal.

I tried the Feline Diet over a 4-week period on a 10 lb, 4.5 ft Nile monitor, *V. niloticus*. Observations thus far are:

- The food was readily accepted, but feeding can be messy. Canned food doesn't hold together very well when picked up, shaken from side to side and beat on the ground prior to swallowing.

  I tried placing "bite-size meatballs" in a flat ceramic dish. This contained the mess a bit, and the scattered pieces could be "regrouped" and set back in the bowl. *(As feeding is one of the most risky times to be near these, or any, animals, extra special attention and alertness is warranted when doing this.)*

  The trick to minimizing the mess seems to be in positioning the food so that the lizard strikes straight down. One thought is to place each meatball in a compartment of an ice cube tray... this has not been attempted as yet.

- When the animal defecates, the feces tend to be a bit darker and more liquid, which means cleaning up is a bit more tedious. (Since my *V. niloticus* prefer to defecate in the water, this isn't that big a deal.) My guess was that the lack of hair made the difference, so I tried a combo plate: a couple of fresh-kill rats and a half-can of Zu/Preem. This seemed to be a reasonable compromise in maintaining "fecal solidity".

  As soon as I returned the subject to a whole-rat diet, fecal solidity was as before.

According to Hill's representatives, any store carrying their dog or cat food can order the Zu/Preem diets. Make certain that the salesperson understands exactly what you want, otherwise you may end up with regular cat food. It may help to mention that it is Stock No. 6910, as shown on the Hill's Product Data sheet. (For you iguanophiles, the marmoset diet is Stock No. 6920.)

P.S. If you've got dogs, don't leave any of this food within reach for a second... they'll snatch it right up. My pups seemed to revert to ancestral behavior in getting at it!

NOTE: As with most husbandry techniques, people's opinions fall into many camps. What may work in one case, may not suit another. If you have concerns about what you read or question any information in this newsletter, you are urged to respond for the benefit of the readership and especially for the benefit of the animals in the care of VaraNews' readers. If captive varanid care were an exact, well-defined science, there would be no real need for this newsletter.

Méli–mélo

This section is where you will find the various and sundry, including your amusing stories, quips and anecdotes.

Threatened & Endangered

The following information appeared in the TRAFFIC Bulletin 12(1/2) 1991.

> *Confiscated reptile skins and products valued at Rs600 000 (US$295 000) were destroyed in Madras, India, on 17 December 1990. The stock included 650 000 assorted snakeskins, 70 500 [water] monitor lizard,* Varanus salvator, *skins, ... (p. 1)*
>
> *With effect from 7 June 1991, the Government of Japan has established an import quota system and set a zero quota for the Bengal monitor,* V. bengalensis, *and the yellow monitor,* V. flavescens, *as a prelude to dropping the reservations on those species later this year. (p. 24)*

The following question was received. You are invited to respond.

Do you have any information on the extinct Varanosaurus? Was it the direct ancestor of current day varanids? What other varanids existed in the past?

Publications

This is where books, magazines, newsletter articles, etc. of interest to Varanix members will be discussed. Many people are looking for a source of good literature about varanids. If you know of any good publications, send in the title, author, publisher and publication date/issue. Comments on its focus and usefulness are most welcome.

$289.50 = $200, or $239.50 = $150

No, this isn't a trick equation. Nor is it an economic statement on the declining value of the dollar. In fact, it's quite to the contrary.

The Chicago Herp Society booklist now includes one of the best known medical reference books used in the treatment of reptiles. The 1991 edition of Fredric L. Frye's **Biomedical and Surgical Aspects of Captive Reptile Husbandry** is published as a 2-volume, 680+ page work which includes over 1800 color photographs. List price is $289.50, CHS member price is $239.50.

Hold that checkbook! The same work can be had for $200, CHS member price $150, published by TFH as **Reptile Care: An Atlas of Diseases and Treatments**. As stated in the CHS booklist, this book differs from the other only in price, title, cover and it is minus a dust jacket.

Send order and payment (your choice plus $2 shipping, which is itself an excellent bargain for the shipping weight of 13 - 14 pounds) to Chicago

Herpetological Society, Books, 2001 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60614. (Once again, membership, individual in CHS $17.50/yr, has its privileges.

Various & Sundry

Robert Sprackland reports that the following varanid-oriented literature is available:

Mertensiella #2, Advances in Monitor Research

Edited by Wolfgang Böhme & Hans-Georg Horn, this "must have" publication of the DGHT (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Herpetologie und Terranienkunde e. V.) contains the proceedings of the "First Multidisciplinary World Conference on Monitor Lizards" held in 1989 in Bonn, Germany.

The preliminary table of contents lists 21 papers, including:

- Preferred Habitat, Home Range and Movement Patterns of *V. bengalensis* in S. Pakistan (Auffenberg, Arain & Khurshid)
- The Identity of *V. gouldii* and the Nomenclature of the *V. gouldii* Species Complex (Böhme)
- On the diet of the water monitor, *V. salvator*, in the Philippines (Gaulke)
- Breeding of the Lace Monitor, *V. varius*, for the first time outside of Australia (Horn)

and an epilogue entitled "Varanids: Where do we go from here?" (C. Gans). The other papers are all by authors as notable and respected as those listed above.

Cost, including airmail, for this 250 page work is $25. Orders should go to:

DGHT
c/o Wolfgang Bischoff, Managing Editor
Alexander Koenig Museum
Bonn, Germany

Mythology Comes to Life: Dragons in the Flesh

by Nigel Marvin appeared in World Magazine #46 (1990), a publication of the BBC. Send $4.95 to World Magazine, Hyde Park House, 5 Manfred Road, London SW15 2RS, England.

Eine Betrachtung über die Warane

(A Review of Monitors) by Martin Meissner appeared in the September 1991 issue of DATZ (Die Aquarien- und Terrarienzeitschrift). Though the article is in German, it contains some excellent color photos. Cost is 10 DM; I am told $5 will cover the cost of the magazine and postage. (The only problem is that I couldn't find the address at the time of this writing; it will be in the next issue of VaraNews.)

Also in DATZ, there is a 3-part series by Prof. Dr. Hans-Georg Horn and Gerard S. Visser entitled "Australien, ein herpetologisches Traumland" (Australia, a herpetological dreamland). The many color photos include some excellent shots of Australian varanids. (This article is also in German.)

The series appeared in 3 consecutive issues: March, April and May of 1990. ($15 should get all copies, but this has not been verified.)

Taxonomic Review of the Varanus prasinus Group with Descriptions of Two New Species

is Sprackland's own paper which appeared in *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum*, 1991, Volume 30, pages 561-576. Among the conclusions detailed in this review of the tree monitors, the author offers the description of two new species, *Varanus telenesetes* and *Varanus teriae*.

This volume can be ordered for $30 from: Gregory Terrace, Queensland Museum, Fortitude Valley, S. Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

Original Articles

Possible topics include, but are not limited to, any aspect of captive care, reports on captive breeding, personal experience, description of natural habitats, flora & fauna, legislation.

A Double Clutch and Successful Hatching of Australian Spiny-Tailed Monitors, Varanus acanthurus BOULENGER)

by Rainer Thissen

Reports on reproduction in monitor lizards have become more frequent since 1980, but many of these are to record first generation captive breedings, with rare accounts about breeding beyond the F1 (first) generation. This paper briefly documents reproduction in at least F3 (third) generation *Varanus acanthurus* and the first reported case of double-clutch oviposition for Varanus.

The grandparents of these animals were confiscated in 1983 by German Customs and kept at a public zoo. Reproduction was accomplished later that year and again thereafter. In 1989, I obtained surplus progeny, probably F3 (third) or F4 (fourth) generation, from the zoo. During the first four months 2 males and 1 female were housed in a 30 cm x 30 cm all-glass terrarium. These were subsequently moved to an 80 cm x 30 cm terrarium and kept at 26 - 40 C (79 - 104 F). Nighttime lows were 16 - 20 C (61 - 68 F) during the summer and 14 - 17 C (57 - 63 F) during the winter. During their first winter, hibernation was not attempted.

The following year between October 1990 and February 1991, the ambient temperature was lowered by replacing the 100-watt lamp with a 60-

watt lamp and reducing the period of daylight from 14.5 to 6.5 hours per day.

By March 1991, all lizards has resumed activity: males would frequently engage in ritual combat, and mating was observed 10 - 12 times. On 7 March, the female remained hidden, only to be seen when feeding. By 19 March she was visibily gravid. By 29 March, she had deposited 3 eggs: 2 in sand and one on a shale slab. They were removed and incubated on vermiculite at 27 - 28.5 C (81 - 83F) and 65 - 85% humidity. The egg laid on the shale became yellow and smelly by 11 April and was removed. On 5 May, the 2nd egg was damaged when my young daughter turned it. On 12 May, it split and yolk came out. Inside was a well-developed, dead embryo. On 17 July at 16h30, the remaining egg was slit; the tip of the snout and flicking tongue were visible. By 23h00, the head was exposed and by 18h30 on 18 July, the animal had completely emerged and was about 60 mm (2.4 in) SVL (snout-to-vent length).

Meanwhile, on 4 April 1991 copulation was again observed by both males with the female. On 10 May, four new eggs were laid. These were removed and incubated as described above. At 20h45 on 7 September 1991, the first baby of the second clutch hatched. At 16h10 on 8 September, the next hatchling emerged and by 20h15 the third baby had hatched. The last egg had gone bad, but contained a well-developed embryo.

egg #	Date slit (1991)	Fully hatched	# days incubated	length (cm TL)	weight (gm)
1	17 July	18 July	111	13.5	--
2	6 Sept	7 Sept	120	13.5	3.5
3	8 Sept	8 Sept	121	13.0	3.5
4	8 Sept	8 Sept	121	14.75	3.9

All neonates have been placed in terraria (hatchling #1 from the first batch placed alone, hatchlings 2, 3 and 4 together) similar to that used for the parents. They consume vitamin-dusted baby crickets and water with vitamin drops added. The preserved embryo from the last egg is being given to a museum herpetology department.

Further details and photographs are being prepared for publication.

Captive Breeding Success: *Varanus mertensi, Varanus gouldii*

The following article by Bob Irwin originally appeared in Thylacinus 11(2), 1986.

Captive breeding of two species of monitor

Monitors are rarely bred in captivity. The large size attained by some species results in them not being maintained successfully in the long-term. Bob Irwin is Manager of the Queensland Reptile Park north of Brisbane and his observations provide important additional information on captive reproduction in varanids.

Gould's Monitor ***(Varanus gouldii)***

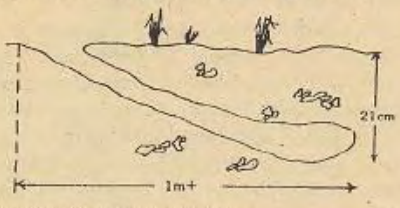
Introduction

Also known as the Sand Monitor, this species is ground-dwelling and is found in a variety of habitats throughout continental Australia except for the far south-east. It is subject to considerable geographic variation in colour, pattern and size. Dorsally it ranges from light yellow to almost black, usually with numerous, small lighter and darker flecks and spots which tend to form irregular, narrow cross-bands. The legs are also usually finely spotted and there is usually a well-defined, white-edged temporal stripe. A total length of 1.6 m is attained (Cogger, 1983).

At the time of this breeding, three adult males and two adult females were housed in an outdoor area measuring 10.5 m x 7.4 m. The walls were concrete blocks to a height of 1.1 m, lined on the inside with 24-gauge galvanised steel. The floor was packed sand, higher in the centre for drainage. Approximately 8 tonnes of sandstone boulders form the central area, under which the lizards have dug many burrows, some as long as 3.5 m. The lizards' average total length was 85 cm.

Breeding

Copulation was noticed over a 12 day period in mid-spring 1984 between one male and one female. The male was aggressive towards all other individuals at this time, except the mated female, and was seen to bite on occasions. The female was observed digging 'test holes' for four days prior to laying, which occurred on 25 December. The 'nest' burrow was over 1m long and did not appear to bear any relationship to the pool or rocks.



Nest burrow of Varanus gouldii

The seven eggs were immediately removed and placed in vermiculite which was mixed with an equal weight of water. A hospital-type incubator

was used and the temperature maintained at 30 - 32 C (86 - 89.6 F) with almost 100% humidity.

All eggs hatched on 16 September 1985 after an incubation period of 265 days. The hatchlings were replicas of the adults except that their colouring was brighter. At hatching their average total length was 27cm. Feeding commenced within eight days but because of observed intragroup aggression at these time, they were separated into two boxes for rearing. By the third month, their average total length had increased to 33 cm and all were feeding on small mice, strips of chicken and tinned Pal dog food. The temperature in their boxes ranged from 28 - 33 C (82.4 - 91.4 F).

Mertens' Water Monitor *(Varanus mertensi)*

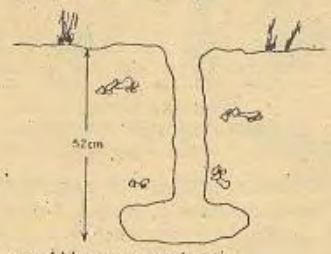
Introduction

Mertens' Water Monitor is an aquatic lizard usually seen basking on rocks or logs, or on branches overhanging rivers or swamps. It will often drop into the water if disturbed and can remain submerged for long periods. It occurs in coastal and inland waterways from north-west Australia to central Queensland and the western side of Cape York Peninsula. A maximum length of 1 m is attained and it is dark brown to black above with numerous, small scattered cream or yellow spots. Ventral colouration is white to yellow with dull mottling on the chest and throat (Cogger, 1983).

In 1984 two adult males and two adult females (average total length 90 cm [35.4 in]) were housed in an outdoor enclosure measuring 11.7 m x 7.2 m. As with the Gould's enclosure, the walls were concrete blocks 1.2 m high and lined on the inside with 24-gauge galvanised steel. The floor was terraced turf with large, blue-stone rocks and a large, tiled pool. Hollow logs and large Pandanus Palm were provided for security and dead trees overhung the pool.

Breeding

Mating was observed in late spring between one female and two males over a period of 20-30 days. There was no aggressive behaviour but 'head bobbing' was most obvious in the more dominant male over a period of 4-5 weeks. Again the female dug 'test holes' for six days before laying 14 eggs on 14 March 1985. The nest chamber was not near the pool or rocks. Unfortunately, one of the eggs was damaged during their removal from the nest but the remainder were incubated in a similar manner to the eggs laid by the Gould's Monitor. After an incubation period of 269 days, one egg hatched on 28 November 1985. After a further three days with no further egg slitting or hatching, it was decided to make a small slit in the eggs with a scalpel. It was feared that the young lizards might not be able to penetrate the egg shell after such a long incubation period. Over the next five days, the remaining 12 young emerged unaided. Their average total length at hatching was 28 cm (11 in).



Nest burrow of Varanus mertensi

The young lizards are now housed outdoors, where the temperatures are 28-33 C, in a ply box approximately 1 m² with a hinged lid, half of which is fly wire. They have a large water container as they prefer to sleep in the water on warm nights. They show no aggression towards each other and feed from one dish on strips of fish and chicken, chopped mice, yabbies and tinned Pal dog food.

Captive Breeding of *Varanus prasinus becarii*

Within the last few months, there have been several reports of successful captive breeding of the black tree monitor, *Varanus prasinus becarii*. What makes this most interesting is that there were no prior records of such an event. At the moment, there are no details, but the successes have been reported by: the Forth Worth Zoo, Bernd Eidenmüller (Frankfurt), the Dallas Zoo and the Oklahoma City Zoo.

Thanks to Robert Sprackland for taking the time to call in the above information. If you have any details on these breedings, please share the information with other readers.

Within days of receiving this news, the following paragraph appeared in the October/November 1991 issue of the Arizona Herpetological Society newsletter (which originally appearing in the August 1991 AAZPA Newsletter):

Black Tree Monitors Hatch at the Forth Worth Zoo

Two black tree monitors, Varanus prasinus becarii, *hatched at the Forth Worth Zoological Park between 19 and 24 June. The breeding pair was maintained on exhibit, and the photoperiod was extended to 24 hours between 5 November 1990 and 5 January 1991. Six fertile eggs (believed to represent a record captive clutch size for this species) were laid on 13 January. It is the first successful captive breeding of this taxon.*

M. Wanner

Ads / Notices

Reasonable-length line ads are free and should relate to the intended audience of this newsletter. Varanix is not responsible for the quality of merchandise advertised and reserves the right to refuse any ad deemed inappropriate.

Consumers are encouraged to inform Varanix of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a product/service. Your comments will remain confidential and on record.

§ PUBLICATIONS §

Write or call for a free booklist from the following vendors unless otherwise noted

1991 Animal Directory of the United States: A listing of over 1200 breeders/dealers of domestic & exotic mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates, wholesalers, equipment & supplies. $19.95. Free ad listing with purchase. FAUNA CLASSIFIEDS, 555 Vista Rio Court, Woodbridge, CA 95258

Herpetology Books - Paul Gritis, 1731 W. Market #12, Bethehem, PA 18018 USA (215) 867-9723

Herpetological Booksellers, Goodwill Lane, Holbrook, NY 11741 USA. tel. (516) 585-6539, fax (516) 585-6115

§ FOR SALE §

Pricelists from the following dealers included the varanids listed. Contact the vendor for pricing.

Gulf Coast Reptiles, Inc. 12710-2 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers, FL 33919. tel. (813) 433-5525, fax (813) 433-3156

The Oct/Nov 91 list included: *V. exanthematicus*, 1-2 ft; *V. niloticus*, 2-4 ft; *V. salvator*, 5 - 5 1/2 ft (captive raised, flawless); *V. dumerilii*, 1 1/2 - 2 ft..

§ WANTED §

The following varanids for captive breeding: 1.0 *V. niloticus*, 0.1 *V. salvator* (both 4+ ft TL), 1.0 *V. indicus* (3+ ft TL). Leave msg. and I will return call. Bill Moss (612) 488-1383.

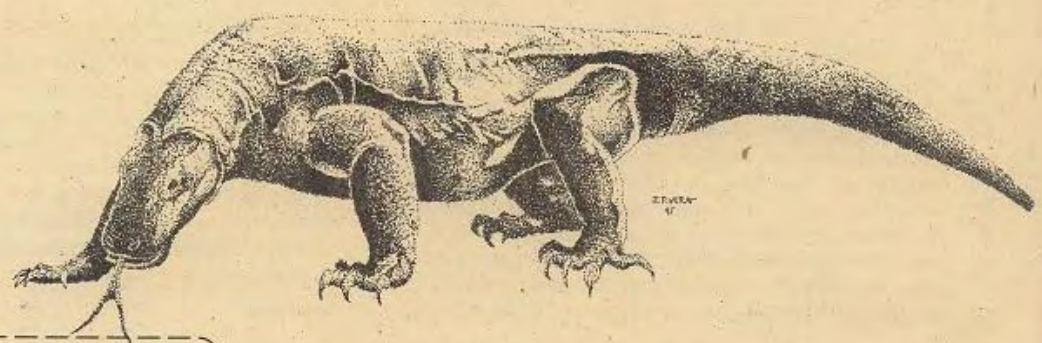
Good quality color transparencies of *V. karlschmidti*, *V. indicus spinulosus*, *V. griseus* in the Middle East, Africa and Pakistan/India. (Limited photo budget.) Daniel Bennett, 118 Sheffield Road, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 8QU, Great Britain

Bob Hole, Jr. recently moved to the east coast and would like to get in contact with "local Varanuts or a Virginia/DC/Maryland herp society". If you can help out, contact Bob at 4201 South 31st St. #840, Arlington VA 22206 or by phone at (703) 379 0802.

Mark Bayless is working on a study of the African savannah monitor, *V. exanthematicus*, and the white-throat monitor, *V. albigularis*. The purpose of this study is to improve husbandry techniques. If you are interested inparticipating, contact: Mark Bayless, 1406 Holly St., Berkeley, CA 94703, or call (510) 527 3744

Varanix
8726D S. Sepulveda Bl. #243
Los Angeles, CA 90045
USA

stamp



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