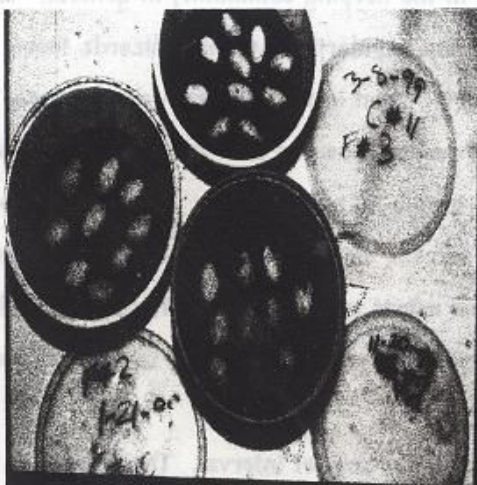


DRAGON NEWS

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 3

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The International Varanid Association is
dedicated to the care and understanding
of captive monitor lizards

From The Editor...

2

1999 was a fantastic year for varanid enthusiasts. There was more happening in the "world" of monitors than any other realm of reptiles. New species and sub-species were popping-up seemingly every month (some valid, others not...). Captive breeding was at an all time high, along with an increasing popularity and interest in the herping community in general. The sad thing, however, is that with the increased interest and popularity in monitor lizards there were fewer written species and breeding accounts in 1999. That is a trend that we hope does not continue. Without accounts or articles from the breeders, keepers and private enthusiasts, Dragon News can't be published. It seems that many people we contacted for contributions to the newsletter acted as if we were asking for military secrets, or that what they were doing was a secret. We can understand that most people to some extent are private, but if you have had an experience or breeding of a species, let people know about your success and take credit for what you are doing!

Dragon News will continue to be published, but not at any set interval. The frequency and number of contributions will dictate publication. Old articles and articles in other publications can only go so far!

The I.V.A. is thinking about posting the next newsletter to a website. Anyone with web access can print their own copy of the newsletter in full color. Those that don't have access or a printer can still request to receive a printed version of the newsletter. The website will be free to all with donations being accepted to maintain the website. There will be a charge for printed copies of the newsletter. The tentative web address is : www.netquest.com/~varanid

This is your forum! Let us and everyone else know what's going on in your world of monitors!

HAPPY MONITORING!

I.V.A. Officers and Dragon News Staff

John Hogston: President and Managing Editor
 Mark K. Bayless: Vice President and Contributing Editor
 Chuck Voracek: Advisor
 Daniel Bennett: Advisor (Europe) and Contributing Editor
 Mark D. Butler, D.V.M.: Veterinary Advisor
 Kelsey Engle: Advisor (Australia), Curator of The Queensland Reptile and Fauna Park

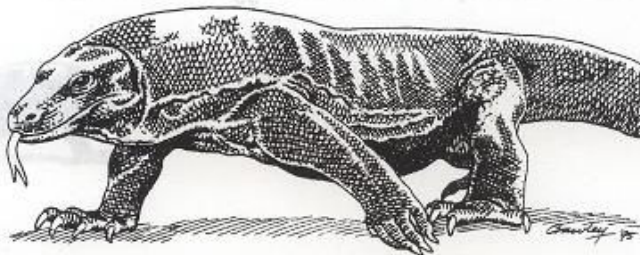
Considerations

Let us know about your breeding successes...
 Send in your animal pics!
 Send in your nominations for the largest privately held monitor...
 Volunteers are needed to help with the newsletter (and now website)...

The I.V.A. would like to thank :

Patrick Nabors, John Adragna, Philip Crawley, Mike Fost, Robert Faust, Jackie Hixon, Gary Maynor, Steve Irwin, Jeff Lemm, Harry Andrews, Becky Speer, Roger Price, Marc Weiss, Pete Zupich, Daniel Bennett, Mark D. Butler, D.V.M., Chuck Voracek, Kelsey Engle and last, but not least, Mark Bayless

For their outstanding and much appreciated
 Contributions to Dragon News!



Varanid News

Varanus gouldii horni : Twins

By Mark K. Bayless

On July 15th, 1999, a clutch of four eggs from an adult female Argus monitor hatched at East Bay Vivarium (Berkeley, California). The eggs were oblong, elongated and had the off-white color that healthy eggs generally have. On this date, out of one egg emerged two fully-developed hatchling *V. gouldii horni*, alive and well. This is the third incident of 'twins' in *Varanus*; the first being in *V. gouldii horni* at the Dallas Zoo some time ago and last year, when Becky Speer of Naples Florida hatched *V. indicus* twins from a single egg (should be published in Reptiles Magazine shortly?). This is the third incident of twins in *Varanus*, all of which have been observed in captivity. It is likely that upon even rarer occasions, this may occur in the wild as well.

If you are interested in *V. gouldii hornii*, and would like to purchase a captive born hatchling, contact East Bay Vivarium....the egg is included too!



The Monitor Lizards of Africa: A Pan-African Checklist

Part vi: Cameroon

By Mark K. Bayless

This multi-part series will examine country by country the monitor lizards that live within the country discussed (see Dragon News 1(2-5), 2(3-)). Some segments will be short, while others may take up several parts within themselves (i.e. Republic South Africa).

Cameroon is situated in West Africa, shaped like an elongated triangle, comprises an area of 475,422 square Kilometers (18,569 Sq. Mi.). It is bordered on the north and north-east by Chad, on the east by the Central African Republic, on the east and south by Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon and Equatorial Guinea on the southwest by the Gulf of Guinea and on the west and northwest by Nigeria, with a total boundary length of 5,159 Km (3,207 Mi.).

There are four geographical regions in Cameroon. The western lowlands (rising from sea-level to 600 meters), the northwestern highlands consist of forested volcanic mountains reaching over 2,440 m in height. Mt. Cameroon (4,095 m), stands isolated on the coast to the south. It is the nation's only active volcano and the highest peak in West Africa. The northern region is essentially open savanna plain that slopes down to the Chad basin.

The climate of Cameroon is divided; the northern and southern regions are two distinct regions. The coastal region has an annual rainfall range between 250 to 400cm (100-160 in.), the inland south between 150 to 250 cm (60-100 in.). The western slopes of Mt. Cameroon receive 600 to 900 cm (250-350 in.) annually. The average temperature ranges from 22°C to 29°C (72°F-84°F) along the coast. In the south there are two dry seasons, December to February and July to September. Total rainfall drops from 150 cm (60 in.) a year in the central plateau to 60 cm (24 in.) northward near Lake Chad, and the mean temperature ranges from 23°C to 26°C (73°F-79°F), although it can reach 50°C (122°F) in the far north. The dry season in the north is from October to April.

Dense rainforest grows along the coast (and becoming rapidly denuded) in the south. The primary rainforests in Cameroon are the Afromontane and the Guinea-Congolian (Bayless, 1997; Sayer, 1992). This gives way northward and eastward to open woodland and savanna. Wooded steppe is found in the northern region where such herbivores as buffalo, elephant, hippo, antelope, eland and kudu dwell. Cameroon has diverse populations of flora and fauna.

Cameroon has 13 national parks, nevertheless poaching takes a high toll on the animals. It is estimated that Cameroon had 376,900 square kilometers of original rainforest, and is estimated to have 155,330 square kilometers remaining, with a decrease of approximately 41.2 % primary forest (Sayer, 1992).

Several survey and herpetological expeditions have traversed into the forests of Cameroon (Mertens, 1938; Dahl and Birket-Smith, 1956; Lawson, 1993; Wild, 1994). There are three species of varanids indigenous to Cameroon, the Nile monitor (*V. niloticus*), forest Nile monitor (*V. ornatus*) and savannah monitor (*V. exanthematicus*). All of these species can be found within eyeshot of one another. Although the difference in microhabitat has been addressed, annual rainfall may be an eco-climate factor separating the species in the same area (Bayless, 1997; Angelici and Luiselli, 1999).

Although *V. exanthematicus* is rarely encountered in Cameroon, found in the open savanna habitat; both *V. niloticus* and *V. ornatus* are found in tropical rainforest Cameroon; the latter evidently still very abundant, as the removal of 70,000 *V. niloticus* skins was taken from Cameroon in 1997 (Anon., 1997) !

One point of mystery is also known to varanids in Cameroon; in 1950, Danish born Jorgen Birket-Smith observed an unknown monitor, a sand colored reptile at least seven feet long (Bille, 1995); In 1974 Dr. Iwamoto observed an enormous monitor through the Cameroon jungle (P.C. to MKB). Both Dr. Birket-Smith and Dr. Iwamoto are qualified zoologists. There appears to be something very large existing in Cameroon. As the continent of Australia has some 22 species of varanids existing on that continent, and Africa having four varanids on that continent, it would seem more than likely that there is room for one or two more species of varanids in Africa....

The author thanks Dr. Dwight Lawson, Dr. Luiselli Luca, and Dr. T. Iwamoto for

their generosity and kindness in my quest for the secret lives of Cameroon varanids.

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Nile monitor pictures courtesy of Rob Faust



ATTENTION READERS:

Re: "Notes on Breeding the Timor Monitor"

In the last issue I failed to express thanks to Patrick Nabors who has been extremely helpful in my efforts in breeding timor monitors. I have purchased animals from him on several occasions and have always been satisfied. I would not hesitate to recommend his animals. The comment printed could be misunderstood, and my meaning was that care needs to be taken when looking for captive bred monitors as there are many people who misrepresent this. Patrick is not one of them. I have been to his facility and seen his breeding operation, which is impressive.

Thank you,

Roger C. Price

Editor's note:

The Dragon News staff would also like to apologize to Mr. Nabors for any misunderstanding in printing of the article.



The Desert Monitor (*V. griseus*) distribution and its population density in two different landscape areas of Uzbekistan

Part III

By Dmitryi Grechanichenko

Alma-Ata Zoo

Director

Editor's note: This series of original papers will be in Dragon News over the next few issues, With five papers being presented. These papers will discuss the field observations and Studies made by the author on the desert monitor (*Varanus griseus caspius*) of Uzbekistan.

The observations were carried out in Karshinskaya steppe (1978-82; 1984; 1986-87) and central Kizil-Kums (1988). Recording of the animals was made in optimum time for *Varanus griseus* activity. The general length of the investigated route of travel was 580 km made by the study team, with 37 lizards being recorded.

It was noted that *Varanus griseus* remained only on low maintained or developed territory (i.e. Maimanaktau; Kasantau) of the Karshinskaya steppe, where a density of .06-.07 specimens per hectare was noted.

On undeveloped territories the quantity of *Varanus griseus* is much more, .37-.10, along ravines and on the foothills plain. The density of the *Varanus* lizards distribution is .08 specimens per hectare on near salt-cellars of Shorsayaskaya hollow. Monitors seem to avoid the flat watersheds with thinly growing epnemerical vegetation. On sandy plains *Varanus griseus* was .05-.09 specimens per hectare, and on sand ridges near Mubarek town there was a .07 specimens per hectare.

In the central Kizil-Kums (near Ush-Kudak) the highest density was noticed on the low mountains of Bukantau with .08 specimens per hectare noted there; and Gamanoum sand ride with .04 specimens per hectare the least quantity of *Varanus gri-seus* was marked on sandy-road-metal plateau.



Birth Announcement!!!

Merten's Water Monitors Hatch At The Bronx Zoo

Between 20 December 1998 and 4 January 1999, after 266-289 days of incubation, eight Mertens' water monitors (*V. mertensi*) hatched at the Bronx Zoo. The hatchlings' average weight was 25 grams, and their average total length was 294 mm long.

On 23 March, a single egg from a second clutch of five eggs laid by the same female, hatched after 295 days of incubation. It weighed 26.8 grams and measured 306 mm in total length. The adult female was introduced to the male on 29 January 1998.

On 6 April 1998, she laid eight eggs in a nest box filled with a mixture of damp sand and coconut mulch. The five eggs from the second clutch were laid on 1 June 1998. The eggs, which averaged 67 mm in length, 29.5 mm in width and 37.6 grams in weight, were equally divided into two groups for incubation. Incubation media used were (1) a 1 : 1 ratio of vermiculite to water by weight, with a light moss layer on top, and (2) a combination of moss, perlite and water. Both groups were kept at 100% relative humidity with a temperature range of 86.4-88.0 degrees F (30.2-31.1 degrees C).

Source: A.Z.A. *Communique* August, 1999



Desert Monitor Monograph Anyone?

Dr. Alexey Tsellarius, Dept. of Herpetology, Zoological Institute, Russia has done extensive field work on the desert monitor lizard (*Varanus griseus*). He needs your help. If you would like to see a published work of his studies of this unique and mysterious varanid, you can help. Dr. Tsellarius needs your contributions to get this book published in English. If you can help him, send your check or money order to Mark Bayless, who will consolidate and send them all together "en-mass" to him. Dr. Tsellarius needs \$1500 to get this book published. As he said to M.B. in his letter, "It is a very pity that there is no possibility to complete a field observations on desert monitor, but it will be much more pity the performed work will be in vain". Please send what you can to :

Mark Bayless
1406 holly St.
Berkeley, CA. 94703

Thanks, Everyone!
Dragon News staff.....



The I.V.A. Welcomes New Members:

Edward J. Pirog
John & Sandra Binns
Steve Rye
Stan Carpenter
Frank Trimboli

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CLASSIFIEDS

This Section is open to I.V.A. members who wish to buy, sell Or trade varanids, tegus or other related products. Non-Members Can place ads at a rate of .50 per word (no minimum). Dealers Can place quarter page ads at \$20, half page ads at \$35 and full Page ads at \$50. Note: The I.V.A. is not responsible for the Quality of the animals or products in any ad.



FOR SALE: F3 baby timors. \$150 each. Ackies available. Roger 573-637-2510.

FOR SALE: Dumeril's monitors: Captive bred hatchlings periodically available. \$200 each. Mike Fost 710-935-0664.

FOR SALE: Back issues of Dragon News! \$45 (U.S.) for current set.

Make check out to I.V.A. and mail to:

John Hogston

3008 42nd Ave. S.

Minneapolis, MN 55406

FOR SALE: Captive bred mangrove monitor. Male, 3 years old, approx. 3' TL. Have hatch data and still have egg! Absolutely the nicest animal You will ever see! \$175 O.B.O. Will consider trades for any timor-Complex animal. John @ 612-722-8514. E-mail: dragonnews@Yahoo.com

FOR SALE: "Sauria (Lizards and Varanids) of Sri Lanka: A checklist and an Annotated bibliography" by A. de Silva. 52p. 1998. Dept. Wild-Life conservation/GEF/UNDP/FAO. \$10 + \$4 postage. Send Checque and request for this book to K.A.I. de Silva, faculty of Science, Peradeniya University, Sri Lanka.

WANTED: Locality-specific pictures of varanids in New Guinea and Indonesia. Pictures of locality-known animals in private collections are also Welcome. Contact John @ 612-722-8514; dragonnews@yahoo.com

International Varanid Association Membership Form And Questionnaire

I.V.A. Membership is \$20 a year (U.S.) and \$30 a year foreign (U.S. funds).
Membership includes 3 issues of Dragon News (The journal of The I.V.A.),
And an annual membership directory.

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IS THERE A PRODUCT RELATING TO MONITOR LIZARD CARE
THAT YOU WISH EXISTED ? _____

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