
NEWS NOTES

Cologne Zoo Hatches *Varanus macraei*; Monitor Stolen



The Cologne Zoo has become the second zoo in the world to successfully reproduce *Varanus macraei* in captivity. Five live offspring resulted, produced by a pair of adults confiscated and given to the zoo in January 2007.

One of the *V. macraei* offspring (depicted below) was recently stolen from the Cologne Zoo. Any information pertaining to the theft or whereabouts of the specimen can be directed to:



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Photographs by **Thomas Ziegler**

Source: Net-Tribune, 7 August 2008; Thomas Ziegler

Monitor Lizards Confiscated

Four monitor lizards, presumably *Varanus bengalensis*, were confiscated in Kaggalipura village, India by state police officials on 17 August 2008. According to officials, the accused individuals, belonging to the Hakki Pikki tribe, were planning to sell the lizards, possibly to roadside hotels as delicacies. Monitor lizards are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, and the confiscated lizards will be sent to the Bannerghatta Biological Park for veterinary analysis.

Source: The Hindu, 18 August 2008

Six Fined for False Trade Description in Hong Kong

Six Hong Kong businessmen have been fined for selling water monitor lizard meat falsely labeled as that of a crocodile. One of the businessmen was convicted on 1 September, 2008 in Eastern Magistracy. Customs officers disguised as customers purchased the alleged crocodile meat, which was later determined to be water monitor (*Varanus salvator*) lizard meat, from a shop on Ko Shing Street, Sheung Wan, in September 2007. Customs officers fined the businessmen for trading water monitor lizard meat under a false description.

Source: News.gov.hk 3 September 2008

Monitor Lizards Rescued

A total of 1,261 monitor lizards (of unspecified species) and 11 pythons destined for the black market trade were intercepted by officials in Bukit Astana, Indera Mahkota, Malaysia on 20 October 2008. The animals were discovered in an uninhabited house when raided by officials. It is suspected that a syndicate was planning to smuggle the animals overseas however no suspects were apprehended. The seized reptiles will be given to the Wildlife Protection and National Parks Department for further action.

Source: The Star Online, 25 October 2008

Thousands of Live *Varanus bengalensis nebulosus* Seized

In two separate raids carried out by the Malaysian Department of Wildlife and National Parks in Muar and Segamat, Johor, officials have seized more than 7,000 live Clouded monitors (*Varanus bengalensis nebulosus*) in addition to hundreds of carcasses of protected wildlife species. The first raid in Muar on 4 November 2008 led to the confiscation of 51 live *V. bengalensis nebulosus* and hundreds of frozen bird, mammal, and snake carcasses. The second raid, conducted on a shop in Segamat on 7 November, resulted in the seizure of 7,093 live *V. bengalensis nebulosus* believed to be destined for restaurants and traditional medicine dealers. A man in his 50s was arrested in the first seizure and has pled not guilty at the Tangkak Magistrate's Court. The confiscated monitor lizards are scheduled to be released back into the wild.

Source: New Straits Times, 12 November 2008

“AG Warane” of the German Society of Herpetology and Herpetoculture (DGHT) Re-established

On 8 November 2008, around 30 monitor lizard enthusiasts met in Kahl am Main (near Frankfurt) to re-establish the “AG Warane”, the monitor lizard working group of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Herpetologie und Terrarienkunde (DGHT). This working group existed until some years ago under the name “AG Warane und Krustenechsen” (monitor lizards and beaded lizards).

Aims of the AG Warane:

- Organize and connect interested and dedicated keepers of monitor lizards
- Increase the transfer of knowledge
- Publication of experiences and observations in a specialized newsletter
- Connect scientific and hobbyist communities
- Strengthen the international cooperation with other working groups
- Support beginner monitor lizard keepers and new comer scientists
- Assist in problems with authorities
- Preparation of breeding statistics and placement of captive bred specimens

Leadership of the working group:

Kay Uwe Dittmar (working group leader)

André Koch (scientific leader)

Henning Schwier (editor)

Christina Rüggeberg (treasurer)

At the meeting three talks on monitor lizards were presented. First, Steven Arth talked about the keeping and breeding of the spiny-tailed monitor lizard, *Varanus acanthurus*. André Koch reported on the project “Wallacea & Warane“, which investigates the phylogeography and systematics of Sulawesi water monitor lizards (*V. salvator*). Finally, Robert Richter reported on observations of wild monitor lizards near Darwin, Australia.

Monitor lizard enthusiasts are invited to join the AG Warane. Additional information can be found on the working group home page: <http://www.dght.de/ag/warane/warane.htm>.

Monitor Lizard Interest Community (IGW) Founded

The monitor lizard interest community, Interessengemeinschaft Warane (IGW) was founded on 1 November 2008 by Frank Mohr, Esther Böck and Thilo Böck as a volunteer-based, non-registered interest group. The principal reason for creation of this interest group was the lack of an organized network of monitor keepers, enthusiasts and breeders in German-speaking countries. The main goal of the IGW is to advance the captive husbandry of monitor lizards through cooperation between private keepers and zoological associations and institutions.

**Aims of the IGW:**

- Document captive breeding statistics and establish a registry of monitor lizards kept by IGW members

- Limit inbreeding by creating breeder communities which allow for the exchange individuals between breeders.
- Improve general knowledge of monitor lizards through documentation of observations on captive and wild individuals.
- Educate beginner monitor keepers
- Improve the current state of the trade in wild-caught monitor lizards
- Raise awareness of technological advancements which can help improve captive husbandry
- Publish a biannual magazine entitled 'Varanus' (in German) on the captive husbandry and veterinary treatment of monitor lizards
- Produce an annual calendar with high quality photographs of members' monitor lizards
- Hold an annual convention which will include lectures, workshops, talk-shops and reports on activities and achievements of the IGW

Although most members of the IGW are from Germany and German-speaking countries such as Switzerland and Austria, anyone with an expressed interest in monitor lizards is welcome to join. Additional information on the IGW can be found on its website: <http://www.ig-warane.de> (German), or on its international website (English): <http://www.ig-varanidae.org>



Varanus varius with tick attached to eyelid. Cooloola National Park, Rainbow Beach, Qld.
Photograph by Troy Bell tjb@bellsmobileservices.com.au