
NEWS NOTES

Report from the First Annual Meeting of the “AG Warane”

The first annual meeting of the re-established “AG Warane” of the DGHT took place on 18 April 2009 in Hanau near Frankfurt. About thirty German monitor enthusiasts attended the meeting.

The program was opened by Klaus Wesiak (Frankfurt) with a talk about the successful keeping and breeding of *Varanus auffmanbergi*. Rudolf Wickert from the Frankfurt Zoo talked about his experiences in monitor keeping at the ‘Exotarium’ during the last twenty-five years. Remarkably, the Frankfurt Zoo has kept and bred the Mindanao water monitor (*V. cumingi*) from the Philippines for more than two decades.

Later, Ulf Riedel and Klaus Wesiak (both from Frankfurt) reported on a case of breeding in *V. albigularis* with complications, which required surgical interventions. In many slides, it was demonstrated that egg-binding represents a well-treatable problem, if it is recognized at an early stage.

With humour, and technically-versed, Dietmar Kiehlmann (Overath) talked about his experiences of forty years of monitor keeping. Once, for instance, he met professor Robert Mertens, Germany’s renowned herpetologist and author of several monitor species descriptions.

André Koch (ZFMK, Bonn) closed the meeting with a scientific talk about systematics and endemism of Indo-Australian monitor lizards.

Jacksonville Zoo Welcomes Komodo Dragons

The Jacksonville Zoo, in Jacksonville, Florida, USA has recently celebrated the grand opening of its new Asian Bamboo Garden exhibit. Featured within this exhibit, in addition to a walk-through garden featuring over 30 types of bamboo, are two adult male *Varanus komodoensis*. According to zoo officials, the *V. komodoensis* are to be part of a captive breeding program once an adult female is acquired.

Source: News4jax.com- 6 March 2009

Man Dies from Komodo Attack

An Indonesian fisherman was attacked and killed by Komodo dragons (*Varanus komodoensis*) while in search of fruit in an area forbidden for people to enter at Loh Sriaya, Komodo National Park, Indonesia. Thirty-two year old Muhamad Anwar bled to death on his way to a hospital on nearby Flores Island after sustaining bites from two dragons.

Source: [CNN](http://CNN.com)- 24 March 2009

Monitor Lizards on Military Runway in Florida

Reports of *Varanus niloticus* on the grounds of Homestead Air Reserve Base near Miami, Florida, US, have raised concerns for human health and safety, with monitor lizards occasionally seen basking on the runways of the base. According to Scott Hardin, exotic species coordinator for Florida’s Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, *V. niloticus* began showing up near the air reserve base in 2008, and believes the population may be reproducing.

Source: National Geographic News- 19 May 2009

Malaysian Wildlife Officers Seize 210 Monitor lizards

Malaysian wildlife officers seized 210 *Varanus bengalensis nebulosus* that were believed to be for sale at a village in the central Pahang state. A raid led by the Malaysian wildlife department resulted in the discovery of the *V. bengalensis nebulosus*, encased in individual sacks. The monitors were valued at around 10,500 ringgit (\$2,837 USD). *Varanus bengalensis nebulosus* is a protected species in Malaysia and is highly sought after for its meat, which many Malaysians regard to have medicinal properties.

Source: Earthtimes.org- 20 April 2009

Indonesian Zoo Welcomes 32 Newborn Komodo dragons

The Surabaya Zoo, in Jakarta, Indonesia, has recently hatched 32 *Varanus komodoensis*. According to zoo officials, 14 eggs are still currently incubating. Although *V. komodoensis* has been kept at the zoo since the early 1980s, this recent event has brought their total number of captives from 34 to 66 individuals.

Source: *China Post*- 23 March 2009

1,200 Monitor lizards seized

After a high-speed pursuit on the Kuantan-Gambang highway in Jalan Kuantan-Gambang, Malaysia on 8 April 2009, Pahang Wildlife and National Parks Department officers uncovered 1,200 *Varanus bengalensis nebulosus* in the back of the perpetrators' truck. According to officials, the driver and two assistants, aged between

37 and 50, traveled from Johor to purchase the lizards from the Orang Asli people in Jalan Kuantan-Gambang. A raid of a house at the Mencupu Orang Asli settlement the same day resulted in the seizure of 34 additional *V. bengalensis nebulosus*.

Source: *New Straits Times*- 14 April 2009

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo Hatches *Varanus gouldii*

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, Nebraska, US, successfully hatched five *Varanus gouldii* in December 2008. At an average incubation temperature of 29.7 °C, the first hatchling emerged after 186 days, three weeks earlier than predicted. This reproductive event represents the zoo's first successful captive breeding of any varanid species.

Source: *AZA Connect*- June 2009



Varanus gouldii hatching. Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo. Photograph by **Brandon Greaves**