
NEWS NOTES

Parthenogenesis Reported in *Varanus niloticus*

Reptile Village, a small reptile zoo in Kilkenny, Ireland, has reported a case of parthenogenesis in *Varanus niloticus*. According to curator James Hennessy, one of the zoo's 10 year old, 1.4 m female *V. niloticus*, having never been with a male, produced a clutch of 21 eggs. Though most of the eggs failed to develop, one egg incubated full-term and contained a fully-developed embryo which had died in the egg. According to the zoo's website, this specimen was physically sexed as a male and has been preserved at the zoo.

If authentic, this case represents the third species in which parthenogenesis has been observed in *Varanus*. Previously published accounts exist for *V. panoptes* and *V. komodoensis*.

Source: irishtimes.com – 1 July, 2009 ; Wikinews - 4 July 2009 ; <http://reptilevillage.net>

Florida Expands Python Hunting to Include *Varanus niloticus*

In response to growing concerns over exotic reptiles which has become established in southern Florida, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission recently announced a policy which will give licensed hunters authority to kill pythons and other invasive reptiles in south Florida. The policy, which takes effect 29 August 2009, will allow hunters with licenses for deer, hogs or alligators to kill Burmese pythons, green anacondas, and Nile monitors, but only in season and with approved weapons, and all reptile kills must be reported to the commission.

Source: UPI.com – 22 August 2009



Varanus bengalensis nebulosus. Central Catchment Nature Reserve, Singapore.
Photograph by **Shirly Ng**.

Malaysian *Varanus salvator* Feeds on Human Remains

Remains of a dead infant were found in a garbage bag along the banks of the Kelantan River in Kampung Peramu village, Pahang, Malaysia, after it had been partially consumed by an Asian water monitor, *Varanus salvator*. Witnesses claimed to have first seen the garbage bag a few days earlier, but thought nothing of it, even though whatever was in the bag was being eaten by a monitor. Upon investigation, a police team found only the newborn's head and part of the right arm. Kampung Peramu village head Baharuddin Sulong said that this was the first time such an incident has occurred in the village.

Source: *New Strait Times* - 5 Aug 2009

negative connotations associated with it. Proposed name changes to *Voranuch* or *Voranus* were abandoned when several individuals named Voranuch and Voranus had contacted the department's office to complain that they would have to share their name with the lizard.

Source: *The Nation*- 3 July 2009

Cameron Park Zoo Unveils New Komodo dragon

The Cameron Park Zoo in Waco, Texas has recently unveiled a brand-new Asian Forest exhibit, which among other animals such as Orangutans, houses a sub-adult Komodo dragon, *Varanus komodoensis*.

Source: *wacotrib.com* – 14 August 2009

Monitor Lizard Keeps its Name

Thailand's Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation wildlife conservation office has abandoned plans to assign a new Thai name for the water monitor, *Varanus salvator*. Department officials suggested that the name *hia* be changed, due to the many

Indonesian Government Plans to Relocate Komodo Dragons to Bali

Recent plans by the Indonesian Forest Ministry to relocate ten *Varanus komodoensis* from East Nusa



Varanus scalaris. Halloran's Hill Conservation Park, Queensland. Photograph by **Tim Wiemers**.

Tenggara Province, West Manggarai to the island of Bali have drawn a considerable amount of criticism by conservationists, West Manggarai residents, and Indonesian student groups. The animals are planned to be relocated from Wae Wuul Nature Reserve to Bali Marine and Safari Park. According to Hans Manangsang, head of the Bali park, the population of *V. komodoensis* has declined considerably due to fire and habitat alteration, thus necessitating the transfer of some animals. Opponents of the plan claim that the move is merely designed to increase Bali tourism; a charge park and government officials deny. The government has also cited the need for ‘genetic purification’ as a reason for the move; a reason quickly denounced by opponents. “If the goal of the move is genetic purification, why should the dragons have to leave their habitat? It’s an illogical reason” opined Herman Son.

Source: *The Jakarta Globe* – 24 July, 1, 4, 6, 7 August 2009

East Nusa Tenggara Asks for Return of Dragons

Esthon Foenay, Deputy Governor of East Nusa Tenggara Province, West Manggarai, has asked Bali Marine and Safari Park to return four *Varanus komodoensis* they currently possess. The request comes in the wake of a controversial plan to relocate ten dragons from East Nusa Tenggara to the Bali park. The origin of these animals is not known. Tamen Sitorus, head of Komodo National Park, believes the animals may have originated as captive-bred offspring from any number of Indonesian zoos and not from East Nusa Tenggara. Genetic tests would determine the specimen’s origin, though the timing of this comes as a larger controversy over the planned relocation of ten wild dragons from East Nusa Tenggara to the Bali park looms.

Source: *The Jakarta Post* – 6 August 2009



Varanus salvator. Sungei Buloh Wetlands Reserve, Singapore.
Photograph by **Madeline Teo**