



Fact Sheet for Black Throated Monitor Lizard

Common name: Black Throated Monitor or Ionides Monitor

Class: Sauropsida

Genus & species: *Varanus albigularis ionidesi*.

The Black Throated Monitor is a member of the Varanidae Family of monitor lizards. There is some confusion about the actual taxonomic classification of this species due to recent changes and inconsistent use of common names. For a time it was believed that the Black Throated Monitor was considered a subspecies of the White Throat Monitor, Now, the Black Throated Monitor, as well as the White Throat Monitor are considered variants of the Cape or Rock Monitor *Varanus albigularis*.

Size: Can grow up to **12.1m** in length from the tip of their nose to the tip of their tail and can weight over **23 kg**. They can live up to **25 years**.

Distribution: The Black Throated Monitor can only be found in South Eastern Africa south of the Sahara Desert in Tanzania.

Habitat: Rock Monitors are mostly terrestrial and can be found in dry savannah regions. They tend to find shelter in burrows, at the base of trees, or if juvenile, in the tree. These monitors are not great swimmers and do not have aquatic tendencies like most monitors do.

Natural history: Black Throated Monitors are large carnivorous lizards with short muscular legs and a strong tail. It also has holding teeth, claws, and a thick skin to protect it from bites and scratches from predators and prey. When threatened, a monitor will inflate its body, hiss, lash with its tail, and even bite if provoked. They are usually grey or tan in colour and have thick dark bands round its tail. It also has large whitish spots that almost look circular in rows down its back. The spots often come together near the monitors' spine. These markings help us identify the Black Throated Monitor from the White Throat, and other variants of the species. Though they all have this pattern, it is much more distinct in the Black Throated Monitor. The throat is also more dark or black in colour.

Diet: Black Throated Monitors are carnivores. They feed on other lizards (like younger Black Throat Lizards), snakes, birds and rodents in the wild. In captivity young monitors do well on a daily diet of crickets, mealworms, and occasional pre-killed pinkie mice. It is good to dust your food with vitamins and minerals prior to feeding. As your monitor grows, you can increase the size of its meals; just feed it every other day to give it time to digest its food. Monitors enjoy a good variety of foods. You can feed them mice, small chicks, baby rats, various insects, snails and boiled eggs.

Reproduction: In the wild up to **37 eggs** can be found in a clutch. Deposition sites may vary considerably. Some females seem to prefer digging their nests into almost the cement-hard bottoms of ant or termite mounds. In order to retain the humidity that is so necessary for their existence, the termites rebuild their mounds around the eggs, thus protecting the monitor eggs encased within. In other cases the eggs are buried in moisture-retaining damp earth. When subjected to the variations of natural incubation they could take up to a year to hatch. The eggs are around **6.5cm** in length, and they hatch at about **29cm** long. As hatchlings they should be fed daily according to their carnivorous diet. They are known to be bottomless pits when it comes to feeding and can put away huge amounts that seem to disappear with ease. These animals can successfully reproduce at the age of **6 months** old if kept correctly as demonstrated by many hobbyists in the past.

Conservation status:

UNEVALUATED



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Potential danger: Most Black Throated Monitors have a mild temperament when kept as pets, but as with all monitors, the less you handle them, the more aggressive they can become. Monitors are predatory, instinct driven reptiles, use caution around young children. This species is known to have the same temperament as that of a dog. They are rewarding to keep and enjoy all the love and attention they can get. Monitors can also be a great friend to take to the park. Using a leash and harness, you can give your monitor proper exercise, and a chance to get some natural light. Monitor lizards do however sometimes have bacteria in their saliva that can cause infections. They avoid people and other reptiles in the wild and can run away quite fast when startled or surprised.