

Blue-Tailed Monitor

**Common Name:**

Monitor – Blue-Tailed

Other Common Names:**Scientific Name:**

Varanus Doreanus

Group: Monitors

Origin or Range:

New Guinea

Size: 4 – 5 feet total length,
24 inches snout-vent

Average Lifespan:

15-20 years in captivity

Compatibility: Nervous, shy
(as compared to other monitors)

Relative Care Ease: Difficult

Animal Description:

The Blue-Tailed Monitor is a large monitor, having a black body with a pattern of yellow spots in rows across the back. The spots tend toward blue down the tail and legs, generally becoming bright blue at the extremities, usually combining into bands of bright blue on the tail. The tongue is a light color, with a tan or yellow tint. As adults, they tend to become more heavy-bodied with strong limbs. As climbers, they have strong, sharp claws. The teeth are recurved for cutting and razor-sharp, making bites nasty. With regular careful handling, they may calm down somewhat and learn to tolerate human touch, but they must always be handled with care. These monitors are generally wild-caught, which makes them somewhat more nervous. They are extremely quick, and will readily present you with an open mouth – and they don't hesitate to bite. They are one of the more beautiful monitors, related to the mangrove monitor, but are a challenge to keep. These monitors are for experienced monitor keepers ONLY, and should not be kept around small children, as the potential for severe injury is quite high and always present.

The Blue-Tailed Monitor is native to New Guinea, generally found in open forests and along riverbanks. They are accustomed to a hot, humid climate, and enjoy basking in hotter temperatures. When threatened, the Blue-Tailed Monitor will bite, scratch, and tail whip. They are amazingly quick, and have razor-sharp teeth. Bites are long, deep slashes, and can readily become infected. They are fully capable of removing fingers from an adult human. They have a fairly high metabolism, and will defecate daily in the cage. They are prone to toe problems – splits on the toes – and must be kept moist. If splits develop, they can be treated with Neosporin or other clear antibiotic cream.

The Blue-Tailed Monitor is a large monitor, with a total length of four to five feet, approximately 60% of which is the tail. They are heavy-bodies as adults, with sharp claws, designed for climbing. The claws need to be clipped to prevent deep scratches. They have a fairly long neck, and can turn to bite a hand that is gripping them at the shoulders. Their teeth are long, curved backward, and razor-sharp on the back edge. They are agile, and can move with lightning speed.

Hatchlings tend to have brighter colors than adults, and the pattern is more distinct. The colors will fade a bit as they age. They will readily hiss and give a threat display if disturbed, and will not hesitate to bite.

Specific Care Information:**Relative Care Ease:** Difficult

Blue-Tailed Monitors should be kept at a temperature of around 85 - 90 degrees Fahrenheit, with a temperature gradient in the cage. They will require a basking area of between 90 - 100 degrees Fahrenheit. At night, the temperature should be around 75 degrees Fahrenheit. They should also be provided with full spectrum fluorescent lighting that provides twelve hours of light a day.

The enclosure for a Blue-Tailed Monitor should be at least 6 feet high, 4 feet long and 2 feet deep for one lizard. The larger the enclosure, the more content the animal. Climbing areas are a necessity. Shelves and tree limbs, securely fastened, will work for this. Hiding areas are essential in both a cool area and a warm area. Humidity must be kept at 70% - 80%, and a bowl of water large enough and deep enough for the animal to completely submerge is needed. Rubbermaid or similar containers will work for this. Substrate may be papers, Care Fresh, coconut bark, cypress mulch, or dirt. Paper is easiest to change out when soiled, but don't use old newspapers, or your animal will become black from the newsprint. Coconut bark and cypress mulch hold water the best; paper substrate will not provide as good humidity.

The Blue-Tailed Monitor's diet should be varied. They will readily feed on large arthropods, eggs, rodents, fish (whole), crawdads and nightcrawlers. A good calcium supplement is necessary for any food that does not contain bones. Chasing large arthropods can provide stimulation. Live rodents should be avoided, but dangling them from long tongs for them to chase will also provide stimulation. Raw eggs are messy for the lizard's environment and the lizard and can lead to salmonella problems; hard-boiled eggs are better for this reason. They should have access to fresh water at all times.