

Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

Savannah Monitors (*V. exanthematicus*)

General Information

Savannah monitors are found in the grasslands of central Africa. They are a shy animal but typically adjust well in captivity. These lizards are a terrestrial species and prefer multiple hiding places. Baby savannah monitors grow quickly and adults can reach 3-4 feet in total length. With proper care Savannah monitors can live 10-20 years in captivity. In the wild Savannah monitors are inactive during the harshest times of the year. They remain inactive and store fat reserves until the raining season when food is abundant. Breeding season begins with the start of the rains and up to 40 eggs can be laid. The eggs hatch when the rains begin the following year.



Temperature and UV Lighting

Savannah monitors should be maintained between 85-90 degrees with a basking spot of 100 degrees. At night the temperature can drop to 75 degrees. Hours of daylight should be 12L/12D during a 24 hour period. Humidity should also be maintained at 60-80%.

UVB lighting is not a must for monitors, but is recommended. UVB lighting enables reptiles to metabolize calcium, by creating Vitamin D3. However, because their diet consists of rodents and other live prey, they can usually receive enough D3 and calcium through their diet. The bones of the prey will provide calcium, while the liver will provide Vitamin D3. Also it is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB. If you're not sure if your UV light is still producing UVB, bring it in and we'll be happy to test the light for you.

Housing

Baby Savannah monitors can be kept in a 29 gallon cage but they grow quickly and will soon need larger housing. Adult Savannah monitors should be kept in a cage that is at least 6' long by 4' deep.

Bedding

Our recommendation for bedding is bark or some type of mulch. This type of substrate holds moisture very well, allowing a higher humidity. Even though they are from Africa, they are not a desert species. Cages that are too dry can cause dehydration and shedding problems. We also recommend that you mist the bedding several times a week to increase humidity.

Calcium

A calcium and vitamin supplement should be put on all food that does not contain bones. When feeding your monitor mice or rats, no supplement is needed.

Food

Adult Savannah monitors are known to eat too much and become obese. Ideally their diet should consist of insects such as superworms, mealworms, crickets, and waxworms. Other types of suitable foods include lean turkey, eggs, snails, and earthworms. Rats and mice should be used occasionally and should never make up the majority of their diet. A mixed diet of these food items, four to five times per week, is ideal and will ensure proper growth and health.

Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary. Any fecal matter or left over food should be cleaned out several times a week. The bedding should be completely changed once a month and fresh clean water should be provided at all times. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner, we recommend Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat. Savannah monitors can be handled on a daily basis and usually tame down quite well. Always wash your hands before and after handling them.

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Prehistoric Pets Inc. (909) 465-6085

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