

## Bosc Monitor

(*Varanus exanthematicus*)



Country of Origin	Africa
Average Size	36 – 48"
Temperament	Hardy and active
Food Source	Livefood, Rodents
Experience Level	Intermediate

The bosc, or savannah monitor is an African species that is considered one of the easiest monitors to keep. They are attractive in appearance, only of moderate size for a monitor, and can live up to 10-15 years. An adult monitor will be around 3-4 feet in length. They are generally brown to grey in colour, with pretty yellow to orange spots that run in rows along their backs. Their tails have yellow to orange rings that alternate with brown along the length of the tail. With due care and handling a bosc can be tamed but it should be warned that this can take quite a lot of work – and without taming, a bosc monitor can be aggressive and unmanageable.

The bosc monitor is a ground dwelling animal, and a recommended enclosure of twice their length long, and three quarters to one times their length width/depth would be ideal. Example, an adult monitor at four foot would do best in an 8 foot by 3 or 4 foot enclosure. Bark chips are an ideal substrate, and provide it deep enough for your monitor to dig around, as they will often do. Top soil mixed with sand can also be used, but take care to keep humidity at a manageable amount. Hiding places are essential to make the bosc feel secure, and a large water bowl (large enough to soak in) should be changed daily. Rocks and other furnishings are a good idea, but must be sturdy as the bosc is very powerful and has sharp claws.

A daytime temperature of 85-90F rising to 95F in the basking spot should be supplied. The temperature can drop to 75F at night but should not fall below. This species comes from a dry, arid area and humidity should be very low. UVB light is recommended but there is much debate about whether it is necessary for the health of the bosc, and many keepers do not use UVB for any of the monitor family. We recommend a low percentage UVB, which will increase appetite and colour at the very least.

Boscs will eat a variety of food. As youngsters they can be fed crickets and mealworms, with the occasional pink or fuzzy mouse. As adults they will consume large mice, locusts and grasshoppers. Note that it is very important not to overfeed this species. Do not feed dog food as the bosc monitor very easily becomes overweight, and it especially prone to live disease when too many fatty foods are provided. The bosc will always want to eat more, so you will have to know when to stop.

The bosc monitor can live in excess of 10 – 15 years, and is usually best kept singly. It is very hard to sex these lizards, and both sexes can fight. However, some people are now keeping them in pairs or small groups in captivity, and in recent years, we have begun to see more being bred in the UK and Europe, whereas previously, the only available were Captive Farmed in Africa. It is hoped that in future years with successful breedings the need for CF animals will be eliminated. The primary difficulty in breeding is a) correctly sexing a pair, and b) having a large enough enclosure for the high activity and mating levels (this needs to be at least double the size of an enclosure for a single monitor).