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Pets and reptiles

Introduction Guide To The Care Of

Savannah Bosc Monitor Lizard

Scientific Name: *Varanus exanthematicus*

Life Span: over 15 years

Size: between 80-130 cm

Appearance: They have a wide head, which is fairly blunt at the snout and wide at the ears with a short neck. Their tails are short and tapers with a double-toothed crest. They are not sexually dimorphic so are difficult to sex as

Temperament and Handling: If given the choice many Bosc monitors would happily spend all day sleeping, only moving occasional from hot spot, to cool to regulate their temperature. Therefore additional stimulates need to be added into your boscs weekly regime as they are commonly associated with obesity. Bath time proves to be the most common form of exercise. Your Bosc will enjoy the swim around, which is good for muscle strength and keeps them in shape. You may also find your monitor will use bath time as a means to go to the toilet, as it can be a very relaxing experience for them. They also love a venture out of their enclosure, and it is good idea to encourage them out of their vivarium to have a wonder round the house. With time and patience some hobbyists have even managed to train their monitor to walk on a leash, and can be taken for strolls around the garden, on a nice hot summers day. Regular handling will make them more tame but like all monitors, if they are not a captive bred baby or are not handled often savannah monitors can become aggressive.

Housing: Savannahs are strong, large, escape artists. A large, secure enclosure is necessary to house any savannah monitor. A full grown savannah needs a minimum of an 6 foot long enclosure, or twice the length of the monitor. A juvenile (young) savannah will be alright in a 55 gallon aquarium for short period of time but since they grow quickly most owners have their adult set-up ready when they bring home a baby. The height of the enclosure should prevent them from escaping and allow a branch or other decoration in the cage in the off chance that they want to climb on something. Monitors can be destructive so other than some rocks and hides decorations aren't necessary. A large water dish that will allow the entire monitor to submerge himself should be in the cage as well. A large cat litter box is a popular alternative to reptile dishes sold at the pet store. They usually defecate in their water dishes so make sure it stays clean. Make sure the cage has a secure lock and a place for heat lights and UVB lighting on top. For substrate dirt proves to be the best as the risk of impaction as greatly reduced. For a smaller enclosure, eco-earth mixed with a small amount of sand and/or vermiculite will suffice, but for an adult this will need to be provided on a much larger scale. Choose dirt that holds humidity and drains well, is not too dusty, and does not turn to slime when

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wet. Many hobbyists mix 60% soil with 30% sand and 10% vermiculite, which proves to be an effective mixture.

Heating and Lighting: A basking temperature of 95-100 degrees Fahrenheit should be provided along with a temperature gradient down to 85. Ceramic heat emitters are best for achieving temperatures instead of lights. UVB lighting is necessary for almost all lizards. A high percentage UVB output bulb (8-10%) should be on for a 10-12 hour cycle daily to mimic the sun. These bulbs should be changed every 6 months, even if the light doesn't burn out, since the invisible UVB rays expire. Diseases such as metabolic bone disease will occur without appropriate UVB rays. You will find many sites and care sheets provide different information as to whether UV light required. As Bosc Monitors are a diurnal (active during the day) I feel that UV lighting should be provided. A 5% tube would suffice, but personally I prefer to use one of a slightly higher output. Most lizards require additional heating to help the digestion of their food and although there is still a debate around it for boscs we feel that it isn't worth the risk not to provide it.

Humidity and Hydration: 50-60%

Feeding: As with any exotic pet, the more natural a diet, the better. Savannahs will eat gut loaded insects such as crickets, roaches, and earthworms along with appropriately sized rodents. Pinky mice, fuzzies, adult mice, and various sized rats are the usual fare in captivity. Calcium powder should be dusted onto insects and young rodents that don't have good bone density. A low fat, high quality (grain-free) canned dog or monitor food can be fed only occasionally as too much protein can lead to disease like gout.

Please note that this is only an introductory guide based on our opinions and experience, we advise you to continually research and learn as much as possible from as many sources as you can, every animal is different and new care and information is always being developed and found 😊