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Peach Throated Monitor *(Varanus jobiensis)*

Peach Throated Perenties!

Peach throated monitors are medium sized, semi-arboreal to semi-terrestrial monitor species indigenous to northern New Guinea. More specifically, this monitor species occurs within the state of Papa New Guinea, to the Indonesia region of Irian Jaya.. The peach throated monitor is a relatively slender to moderately built monitor with heavily versatile claws, limbs/digits, tails, and bodies, as with most monitors. The snout tends to be more slender with more raised, sharper edges than similar monitors, and the top of the head is dark and patternless. A dark, longitudinal or ocular stripe on each side of the head is also present. Dorsal ground color in this species can be variable, ranging from olive-brown to yellowish brown with small, pale or lighter colored yellowish to whitish spots or ocelli.

The dorsal spots usually cluster into faint dorsal bands along the back and tail, with the tail grading into a paler or lighter grayish to bluish-gray. Peach throated monitors earn their names from their salmon to pinkish-red throats and temporal regions, with hatchlings to juveniles usually being more vividly colored and patterned than adults. Peach throated monitors are a unique and highly enjoyable medium sized, semi-arboreal monitor species which can make great pets in the vivaria, but as with all monitors, require a lot of planning, care, and dedication.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum/Sub Phylum: Chordata/Vertebrata

Class: Reptilia

Order: Squamata

Suborder: Lacertilia

Infraorder: Platynota

Family: Varanidae

Genus: Varanus

Species: *Varanus jobiensis**

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

If provided the proper care, peach throated monitors can attain longevity of at least 15 to 25 years or more in captivity.

Distribution and Habitat

Peach throated monitors are a medium sized, highly arboreal to semi-arboreal species of monitor indigenous to northern New Guinea. More specifically, this monitor species occurs within the state of Papa New Guinea, to the Indonesia region of Irian Jaya. Within its range, peach throated monitors occupy the humid, tropical to sub-tropical lowland rainforests and other tropical forests and woodlands, and costal mangrove swamplands and other forested wetlands. This species is quite semi-arboreal, and utilizes the high and low canopies of its preferred habitats within its range.

Origin/History

Varanus jobiensis Ahl, 1932.

Unfortunately, information about the history of peach-throated monitors in the pet trade is lacking. When the peach-throat monitor was first described in 1932 from a young, alcohol-faded specimen in a Berlin museum, it was classified as a subspecies of the wide-ranging mangrove monitor (*Varanus indicus*).

In 1951, another German herpetologist described similarly faded adults from a Chicago museum and named them *V. karlschmidt*. By the 1990s, several researchers had live animals to compare with museum specimens, and the lizard was given status as a species quite distinct from *V. indicus*. It is formally known as *V. jobiensis*. The Latin name comes from the type locality, Jobi (currently Yapen) Island north of western New Guinea, but the lizard is actually widespread across much of New Guinea and some nearby smaller islands (Robert G. Sprackland 2011).

Experience Level Required

Intermediate/Moderate to Advanced.

Size

Hatchling to juvenile peach throated monitors typically range from 8.0 to 10.0 inches in total snout-to-tail length. As adults, peach throated monitors can vary in size, but most will range within 2 to 4 ½ feet, or about 24.0 to 54.0 inches in total snout-to-tail length. Maximum snout-to-vent length is about 17.7 inches snout-to-vent length (SVL).

Housing and Enclosure

Enclosure System: Semi-Arboreal to Arboreal. Housing must also be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling peach throated monitors can be started out in a 10 to 20 gallon tall enclosure, but will soon require larger accommodations. Enclosure size should be increased accordingly depending on the animal's size. If standard glass terrariums with screen tops are used at any point, ensure that adequate humidity and temperatures are maintained using additional steps to retain it. Adult peach throated monitors will require a minimum of a six foot to eight foot by three foot terrarium or enclosure. Very large, custom designed pens or enclosures are perhaps the most suitable housing for most mid to large sized monitors. As with other monitors, these monitors also powerful diggers, and should also be provided with substrates that enable burrowing and retain humidity well such as chemical and pesticide free potting soil, cypress mulch, orchid bark substrates. Be sure to provide at least 18 to 24 inches of substrate. Monitors in general are very intelligent, alert and perceptive animals, and will require sufficient levels of safety, security, and stimulation and enrichment in order to do well in captivity. Provide a hide box and artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, slabs, or logs for ample basking and hiding opportunities. A large enough water bowl or dish that they can readily enter and exit from that can work with one's enclosure setup and arrangement is also strongly recommended for maintaining adequate longer

term hydration, humidity, and quality of life for these monitors. Water should be changed or filtered regularly at a minimum of every other day to maintain cleanliness and sanitary conditions. Peach throated monitors are primarily a semi-arboreal species, and will climb readily if given the opportunity. Both floor space and height are important when maintaining this species.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

For lighting and heating, these monitors require higher temperatures, as their biology and natural history indicate being from warmer, more humid Pacific region environments. Maintain ambient temperatures inside the enclosure from 80 to 90 degrees F that can be allowed to drop about 10 degrees F from this at night (ensure that temperatures, daytime or nighttime, do not fall below 70 degrees F for prolonged periods of time). Peach throated monitors will also bask, and require basking temperatures of anywhere from 120 to 130 degrees F. This can be provided through overhead UVA/UVB lighting of appropriate wattage, under tank heating pads (UTHS), ceramic or radiant heat emitters, and/or red bulbs. Temperatures should also be adequately monitored using a reliable thermostat as well. A 10 to 12 hour day/night cycle or photoperiod can also be beneficial. It is also important to always ensure that the animal never comes into direct contact with any heating device or element. Spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least twice per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2 to 3 months, particularly water bowls and substrates intended for raising humidity levels (such as cypress mulch, sphagnum moss, etc.). More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well. Most monitors are able to tolerate a wide gradient of overall relative humidity levels within their enclosures ranging from lows within the 30 to 50% range, to highs as much as 70 to 75% or more, through means of providing them with the correct and suitable substrates, as well as other humid hides and retreats. These husbandry components are perhaps the best ways of ensuring the proper humidity levels for your monitors in captivity.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous to Carnivorous; In the wild, peach throated monitors are primarily carnivorous to insectivorous, and will feed on a wide variety of food including insects and other invertebrates, crustaceans, mollusks, and other invertebrates, as well as many small vertebrates including small mammals, birds, bird and reptile eggs, amphibians, and other smaller reptiles. They will also eat carrion, or dead and decaying plant and animal matter as well.

In captivity, variety is essential to a proper and adequate monitor diet. Peach throated monitors can be fed a variety of feeder insects of appropriate size including crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms supplemented with vitamin D3 and calcium. Frozen-thawed rodents of appropriate size and raw food items such as turkey, beef, or eggs can also be offered, but sparingly, if at all, as these food items are high in fat and protein for monitors. It is also important to remember not to overfeed any monitors, as they can become very prone to obesity. Feeding schedules can depend on the age, size, and overall health of your monitor, but typically, an appropriate feeding regime for young and hatchling monitors should be two to three times weekly. Most monitors are very alert, intelligent and personable species that can become food aggressive when in the presence of food, and therefore require additional care when handling. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

Peach throated monitors are a species that may initially be nervous and skittish, particularly newly acclimated specimens or those that have otherwise been only recently acquired. They may bite, claw, tail whip, defecate, or otherwise attempt to flee or escape from what they perceive to

be a potential threat or predator. However, with regular handling, interaction, captive born peach throat monitors can become more tame and personable pets to maintain provided that they are handled and interacted with regularly in a calm and deliberative manner.

Most monitors are very different than many other reptiles in terms of their intelligence and perception, and each individual animal may differ in their temperament or personality. Some will come to acclimate with humans and being handled within a matter of a few months, while others may take many years. Two different trains of thought are out there when it comes to handling or “taming” one’s monitors. The first is to handle and interact with them daily until they become used to or acclimated to handling. This method sometimes works, and sometimes does not, and depends on the individual animal and one’s circumstances. This can also lead to the opposite desired effect, and make an animal further stressed. The other method, or train of thought is to simply leave them alone, and an added or increased trust among one’s monitor may come over time with regular cage and enclosure cleaning, maintenance, or other routine duties. Over time, slow steps may be taken to continue to gain trust with, and eventually become able to handle and interact with them. With this second train of thought, many monitors will become more bold and curious, and interactive naturally on their own than if they are forced out of their hiding places or other areas in order to be handled. Moving slowly and deliberately is always better to help make the animal feel secure, rather than fast, rapid, or jerky movements.

Always keep in mind with regards to the second method, however, that all monitors are capable of delivering bites or scratches, and so some proper precautions when it comes to handling and interacting with them are always recommended. Even animals that can normally be considered “tame” can unexpectedly become threatened, or if one’s hands and arms smell like their normal food. Any new animal should of course also be allowed to acclimate to its environment and surroundings before handling attempts are made. Overall, each animal is an individual, and these techniques may not be effective for all monitors, but are nonetheless the most commonly utilized. **Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens**

Contact

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