Scientific Name
Varanus macraei

Other Names
Blue-spotted Tree Monitor

Range
Indonesian island of Batanta

Habitat
Rainforest

Description
A small, slender lizard with long legs and a prehensile tail that is twice the length of the body. Overall coloring is gray to black with cobalt blue spots over the head, body and tail with a grayish blue underside. Males are larger than females.

Average Size
Length: 3 – 3.6 ft.
Weight: 150 – 250 g.

Lifespan
In the wild: Estimated at 10 years
In captivity: 10+ years

Diet
In the wild: Small mammals, insects, invertebrates and eggs
In captivity: Crickets and worms

Incubation
150 days

Sexual Maturity
Estimated at 1 ½ years of age

Clutch Size
3 – 6 eggs

Predators
Birds of prey and small carnivores (cats, civets)

Population Status
Vulnerable

Behavior
Relatively little is known about the natural ecology and behavior of this species. From the research completed so far, this species is diurnal (active in the daytime) and seems to be almost completely arboreal. Their sharp claws give them a secure hold on almost any rough surface, and they can climb with considerable ease. While moving amongst branches, they employ their prehensile tail as a grasping tool, in much the same way that chameleons use their tails. Unlike chameleons, though, monitors may coil their tails on a plane horizontal to their bodies and rapidly uncoil the appendage for use as a defensive whip.

Like most monitor lizards, the Blue Tree Monitor is a very nervous species that avoids potential predators by fleeing up trees and keeping the tree trunk between itself and the intruder, much as squirrels do here locally.

Reproduction and Breeding
In captive settings, courtship has been initiated by the female. When she is receptive to mating, she approaches the male and the two spend time basking on the same perch over a period of days. Mating usually occurs within the next few days.

Females create a nest of moss, dirt, coconut fiber and leaf matter. She lays her eggs approximately one month after the first mating and buries them in the nest. This ends her parental responsibility. Female Blue Tree Monitors have been known to lay between one and five clutches of eggs in a single year, which appears dependent on their food intake throughout the year.

Conservation
Because of the fairly recent discovery of this species, little information has been discovered about the wild population and exact census numbers do not exist. The Blue Tree Monitor is a specialist animal with habitat destruction on its island home being of the utmost concern. They are listed on CITES (Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species) Appendix II, which gives the species some protection from hunting and collection for the pet trade.
**Amazing Facts**
This animal was only recently discovered in 2001.

Although rather distinct in its coloring, the Green Tree Monitor has a blue phase that makes it look similar to this Blue Tree Monitor.

The Blue Tree Monitor has the smallest distribution of all the tree monitors.