

Southern Heath Monitor *Varanus rosenbergi* (Mertens, 1957)

Size

Up to 1.5 m total length

Description

Similar to Gould's goanna, but slightly shorter in length. Blackish above, finely dotted with yellow or white, and with approximately 15 narrow black bands on the neck and body. The tail is laterally compressed, and alternately banded with black-brown and pale yellow colours, extending to the end of the tail (in which respect it differs to Gould's goanna, where the tip of the tail is unbanded). Belly is whitish, and reticulated with black or grey bands. Limbs are black, and spotted with cream to pale yellow colours.



Photo: Babs & Bert Wells/Department of Conservation and Land Management

Other common names

None recognised.

Distribution



Key To Map: Dark grey = present distribution

Occurs in the far south-west of Western Australia, and north and south of the Swan River, and in South Australia, with isolated populations in Victoria and coastal New South Wales.

Habitat

Found in coastal heaths, humid woodlands, and wet and dry sclerophyll forests.

Behaviour

The southern heath monitor is terrestrial, day-active, and shelters in burrows, hollow rocks or rock crevices.

Diet

The diet comprises reptiles, insects, small mammals, and carrion.

Breeding

The southern heath monitor lays eggs, which it deposits and leaves in a burrow to incubate. Little else is known of their breeding patterns.

Threatening processes

Anecdotal evidence suggests that young are vulnerable to predation by foxes. Sightings are common of younger individuals in areas that have been fox-baited compared to unbaited areas.

Conservation status

2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species	Not Listed
Western Australian Wildlife Conservation Act	Not Listed
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act	Not Listed

Management in Western Australia

- Ongoing fox baiting in Western Australia as part of the Western Shield fox-control initiative will indirectly benefit goannas by reducing potential predators of the young, and increasing their food sources.

Selected references

Cogger H.G. (1992). Reptiles and amphibians of Australia. Reed Books Australia.

Bush, B., Maryan, B., Browne-Cooper, R., and Robinson, D. (1995). A guide to the reptiles and frogs of the Perth region. University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, Western Australia.

Website links

http://www.naturebase.net/projects/west_shield.html