

A New Water-Monitor from Northern Australia

By ERIC WORRELL

(Plates xxvii-xxix.)

In 1944 I collected a number of these large water-monitors at Edith Falls on the upper reaches of the Edith River, Northern Territory, and subsequently a few at the head of the Katherine River, Waterhouse River and Roper River near Mataranka, Northern Territory. Mr. Melbourne Ward of Medlow Bath obtained a large specimen from me collected on the Waterhouse River, and in 1955 I was able to collect two more from Bulliwallah Station, on the Belyando River in Queensland.

This *Varanus* is not particularly common but occurs in isolated colonies in inland areas of the Northern Territory and North Queensland. It is shy, difficult to collect alive, but fairly hardy in captivity.

It is proposed to describe this lizard as a new species after the locality (Bulliwallah Station) in which some of the material was obtained. The type was collected from a waterhole near the Belyando.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Gratitude is expressed to Mr. F. King of Bulliwallah Station who kindly made facilities available and helped me collect material on his property, also to Messrs. L. Robichaux and J. Dwyer for assistance with the collection of specimens.

Varanus bulliwallah, sp. nov.

Form robust; snout broad, depressed on end, distance between anterior margin of orbit and tip of snout a little greater than distance between anterior margin of orbit and tympanum; moderate canthus rostralis; nostrils round, set on upper surface of snout on prominent ridges with longitudinal groove between, about one-third distance from tip of snout to orbit. Limbs stout, digits elongate; tail stout at base, strongly compressed laterally with a rapid taper, double keeled on the dorsal surface from about the first eighth, almost one and a quarter times longer than length of head and body. Tympanum round, exposed, about as large as orbit.

Head short, shields irregular, frontal and prefrontal scales largest, gradually diminishing to supraoculars, supratemporals and loreals; temporals small, granulated; labials and supratemporals somewhat hexagonal and regular; nuchals rounded and granular; dorsals more or less ovate, being entirely keeled; upper surface of limbs and tail with keeled scales. Scales on throat and under surface of limbs smooth, ovate; palmar scales small and tubercular; abdominals elongate, smooth, in about 126 transverse rows between gular fold and anus; subcaudals elongate, smooth, about 220, but tail incomplete.

Colour: Dark brown on dorsal surface with a small light spot on each scale, snout light brown, this colour extending along side of head to tympanum; ventral surface yellow with a regular series of dark transverse bands about four scale rows wide from gular fold to end of tail. There are a few darkish marks on labials. The iris is light greenish and tongue blue. Juveniles are conspicuously marked on dorsal surface with yellow spots.

Measurements: Total length of type 102 cm. or 40 inches. The tail is incomplete, its length being 55 cm. or 21 inches. The largest specimen we have in captivity at Ocean Beach Aquarium, Woy Woy, was collected at Bulliwallah Station and measures 120 cm. or 47 inches.

Discussion: *Varanus bulliwallah* cannot be easily confused with other monitor lizards as it is a conspicuously marked aquatic form. It occurs

inland away from the coastal and mangrove habitat of *indicus*(1) and *salvator*.(2) It is at once distinguished from *indicus* and *salvator* by its short head and position of nostrils on upper surface of snout. The nearest form appears to be *salvator*, it can be separated thus:

Transversely enlarged supraoculars; oval keeled nuchals . . . *salvator*.

Supraoculars irregular, subequal; nuchals irregular without keels . . . *bulliwallah*.

Natural food consists of frogs and fish, and in captivity it is induced only with difficulty to eat anything else.

The type-specimen, in spirits, has been donated to the Australian Museum.

REFERENCES

Mertens, R. (1942).—Die Familie der Warane, pp. 14, 78.

Rooij, N. de (1915).—Rept. Indo-Aust. Arch. i, pp. 146-47.

EXPLANATIONS OF PLATES XXVII—XXIX.

Varanus bulliwallah, sp. nov., in life.

Varanus bulliwallah. Dorsal aspect of head.

Varanus bulliwallah. Lateral aspect of head.

A New Snake from Queensland

By ERIC WORRELL

(Figs. 1-3.)

Several years ago, while examining a collection of snakes at Melbourne Ward's Gallery of Natural History and Aboriginal Art in the Blue Mountains I came across a small snake, superficially resembling "*Denisonia gouldi*," from Dulacca, Queensland. I observed a number of differences, however, which were subsequently borne out in a large series from Queensland collected by Mr. W. Dunmall in the Glenmorgan area. A series of skulls from Queensland was compared with a series of skulls from *Denisonia gouldi* (Gray 1841) from Western Australian localities, and many obvious differences were noted. It is proposed to describe the Queensland snakes as a new species which I have pleasure in naming after Mr. J. Dwyer of Cairns, who was instrumental in locating Mr. Dunmall's series and obtaining working specimens.

Loveridge mentions a specimen of "*gouldi*" given by Mrs. H. McKee of Dalby to a member of the Harvard Expedition. Loveridge comments that this specimen, being the first recorded from Queensland, "should be received with caution." Apparently this was the same as the species I propose to describe as new, as Dalby is in the same area as Glenmorgan, and the snake is a common species.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks are due to Mr. W. Dunmall, Mr. M. Ward, Mr. L. Robichaux and Mr. J. Dwyer for specimens, and Mr. H. Chalmers for his assistance and X-rays. Mr. J. Dwyer kindly drew the illustrations.

Denisonia dwyeri, sp. nov.

Maxillary almost as far forward as palatine; ectopterygoid longer than lower aspect of maxillary bone; a pair of straight fangs is followed by four small grooved recurved teeth beginning at posterior of maxillary arch.

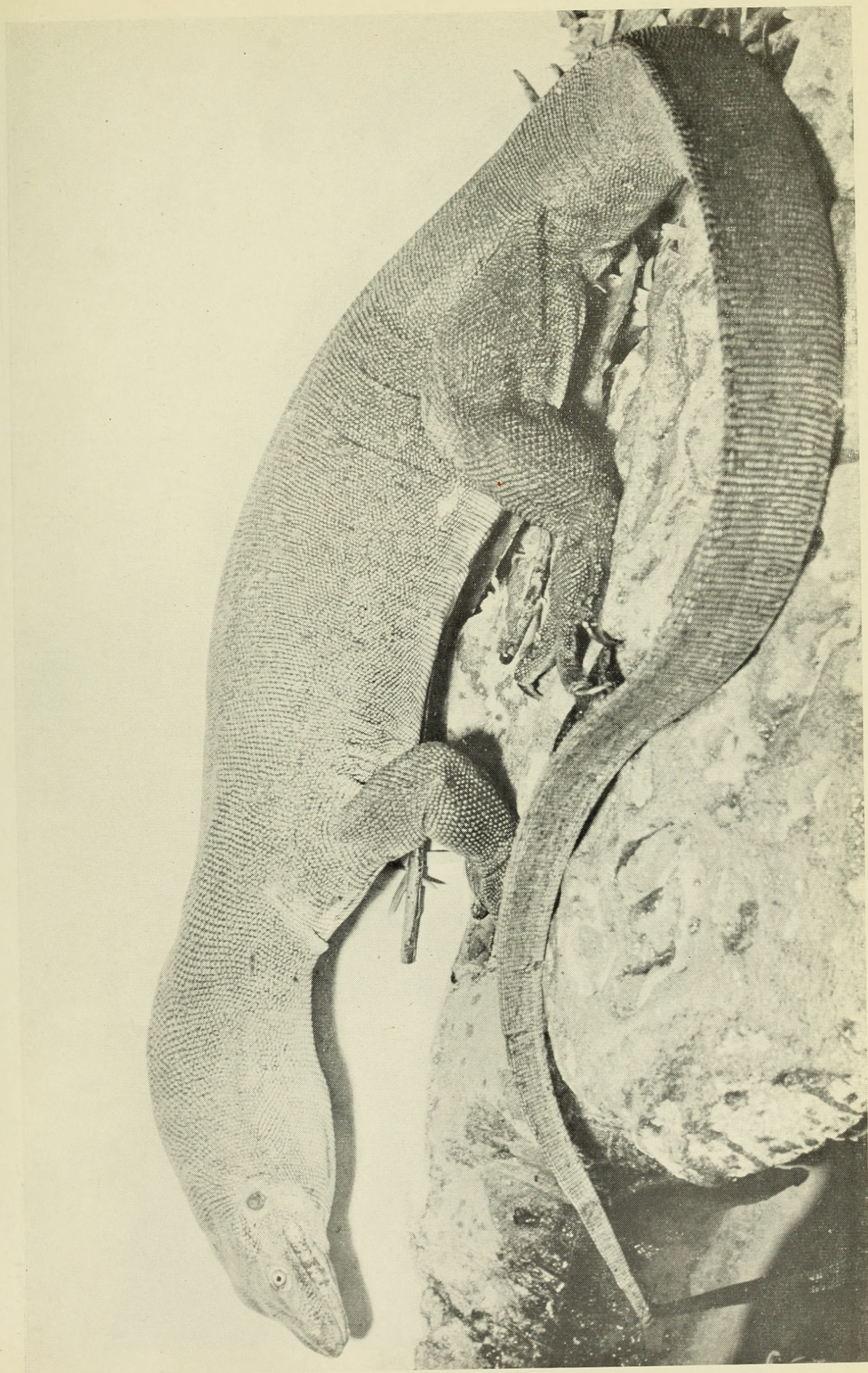
The obvious differences between the skulls of *Denisonia gouldi* and *Denisonia dwyeri* are illustrated. The most outstanding feature, however, is the greater prolongation of *dwyeri*, the smaller frontal foramen, the differently shaped premaxilla, fronto-nasals, prefrontals and post-parietal area.

(1) *Tupinambis indicus*, Daudin, Rept. iii, 1802, p. 46, pl. XXX.

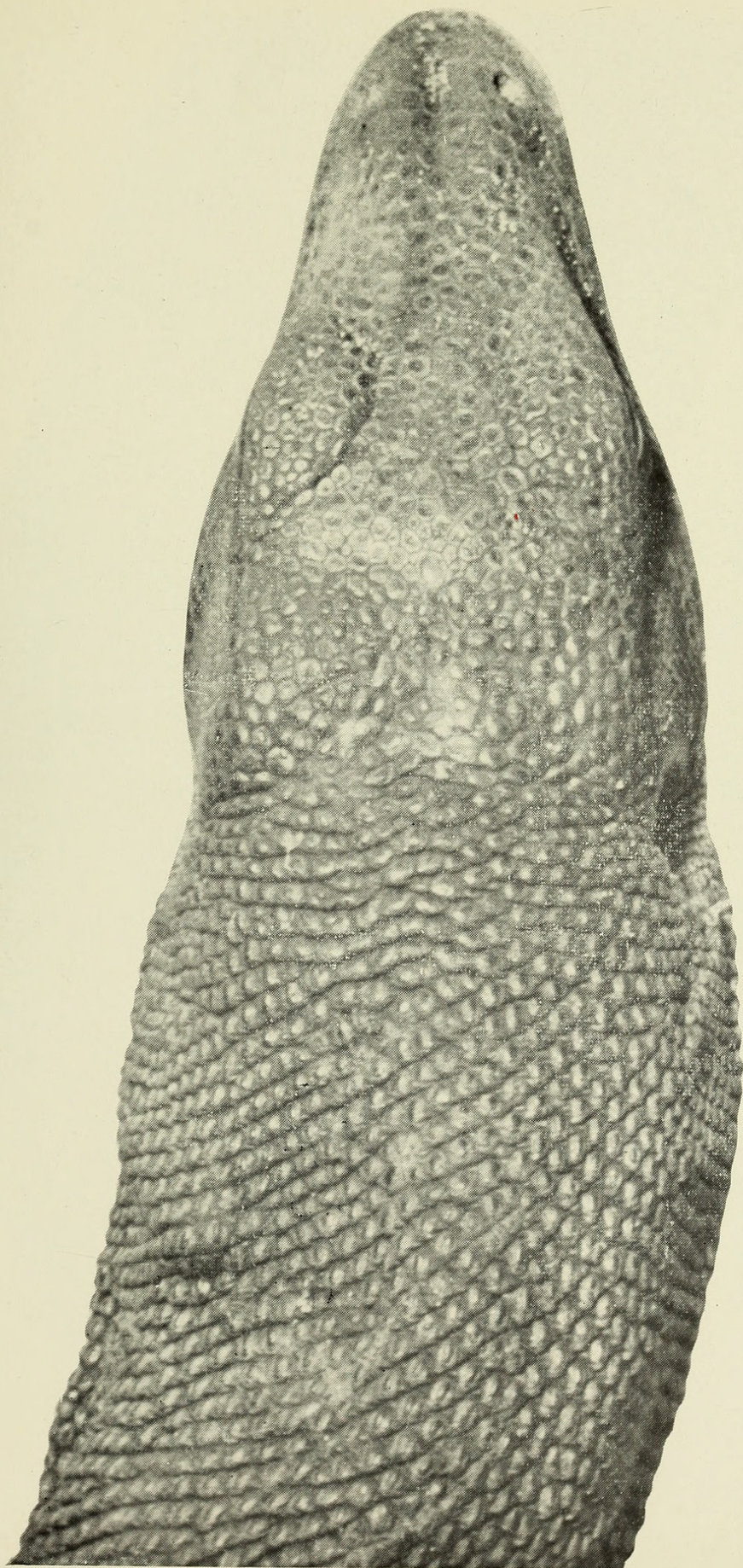
Varanus indicus, Boulenger, Cat. Liz. ii, 1885, p. 316 (s. syn.).

(2) *Stellio salvator* Laurenti, Syn. Rept., 1768, p. 56.

Varanus salvator Boulenger, Cat. Liz. ii, 1885, p. 314 (s. syn.).



Varanus bulliwallah.



Varanus bulliwallah.



Worrell, Eric. 1956. "A new water-monitor from northern Australia." *The Australian zoologist* 12, 201–202.

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