The Komodo Dragon
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Varanus komodensis, aka the Komodo dragon, is the largest lizard on the planet. Living on the islands in Indonesia, the dragons can weigh up to 500 pounds. This monitor lizard dates back more than 100 million years. Their numbers have declined and the reptile is on the endangered species list. Unlike most lizards, the Komodo dragon is carnivorous. They patiently wait for their prey and then attack with sharp teeth. The dragon’s bite contains bacteria that will kill the prey. They enjoy the hot morning sun but find refuge from the afternoon heat. The Komodo dragon has a life span of over 50 years.


This article addresses the genetic diversity of the Komodo dragon and its evolutionary relationships and population. The results of this study will provide information needed to maintain the Komodo dragon’s population on the island of Komodo. Written for researchers, the article outlined the method used in the research, provided charts on the findings, stated the results in a discussion format, and offered their conclusion. Information used in the article was properly cited.


This article provides in-depth information regarding the clinical research performed on the Komodo dragon. Blood samples from 44 Komodo dragons from Indonesian and United States’ zoos were tested. The tests included: blood count, profiles, vitamin deficiency and screening for pesticides and toxins. The article provided detailed information on the material and methods used in the research, analysis of the data collected, and results of their findings, and tables were used to summarize the findings by category. The report had the proper acknowledgements and references. This is an extensive paper, written for professionals studying the Komodo dragon.


This article reports on a study of the annual nesting habits of the Komodo dragon. On the island of Komodo, scientists surveyed 12 major costal valleys, examined the distribution and the density patterns of the nest, and ascertained if there is a preference for a nest type by the female dragons to better understand their breeding habits and determine the population of Komodo dragons. The article outlines the methods used in the study and their findings. This was a large undertaking and the conclusion was that the breeding population is small, and the scientist will continue to monitor yearly. The article was well-written and properly cited. The information is the most current, with the journal to be published June 2004.


This is a well-written student research paper on the Komodo dragon. The information is formatted under the following headings: A description of the species, habitat, natural history, evolutions and the distribution of the
reptile. The picture reflects the size of the dragons and maps show how the reptiles may have arrived on the islands in Indonesia and where the current (1997) population resides. The article provides an excellent overview of the Komodo dragon and appears creditable in its context. The proper citations are noted throughout the paper. It is written for students beginning their studies of the reptile.


This article provides a wonderful pictorial of the Komodo dragon in its natural habitat. The pictures reflected their enormous size, eating habits, sleeping along the river banks and relaxing as they are perched in trees. The information is now out dated but did provide the history of the reptile and the island as studied by Major P. A. Ouwens in 1912. Written for anyone with an interest in the Komodo dragon, the pictures and maps are a must see for a student studying the reptile.


This encyclopedia offers only a brief definition of the Komodo dragon, where they live and their weight. The entry was written for a beginner student, learning about the reptile.


This website was very informative regarding the Komodo dragon. It has several pictures, a play video, a map of Indonesia, a summary column providing information on the class, order, family genus, species, size, weight, life span, etc. It provides in depth information about the lizard species. The Komodo dragon is the largest reptile on the planet. When the eggs hatch, the babies climb up the nearest tree to prevent being eaten by adult Komodo dragons and live there until they are four years of age. They are currently on the endangered list. This was written for a beginner to intermediate reader wanting an overall view of the Komodo dragon. I really enjoyed this website.


The entry provided a very good summary of the history of the Komodo dragon and the islands they inhabit. The current information included the size of the reptile and their eating, sleeping and mating habits. There were several pictures in the text. Since this is a wildlife encyclopedia, it provided more information than other encyclopedias reviewed.


This website provides a photographer’s look at the islands of Komodo and Rinca in Indonesia and the largest inhabitant, the Komodo dragon. The narrative provides information on the islands which are dry, hot, and barren compared to nearby islands. They are made up of silica-rich rock whereas the neighboring islands are more mafic. Both islands are under the control of the park system and tours start at 6:00 am. There are a dozen photographs of the Komodo dragons in their natural surroundings. Information is provided about their eating habits which include their ability to detect odors with their tongues, enabling them to seek out their prey. The dragons are not venomous but their mouth is full of bacteria, and when bitten, an infection would occur, causing death to their prey. The website provided links to additional information. This website is well written and is appealing to any reader interested in the Komodo dragon.

This article reported on the study of supplemental feedings and the effects on the dragon numbers, tourists, viewing opportunities and the local community benefit. It seems that supplemental feedings caused the number of dragons to increase at the feeding sites. When the supplemental feedings were withheld, the number of dragons decreased to natural levels at the same site. In addition, with the decreased number of dragons, there was a decline in the number of tourists, causing a decline in revenue. The article was well-written, outlining the methods used in the research. It provided a site profile of the areas observed. Charts reflected the daily number of dragons, the number of feedings per month, the portion of visitors, and the villages’ monthly revenue over a six year period. The study was published in 2001 and is slightly outdated. However, it was interesting that the feeding of the Komodo dragon can have a financial impact on tourism.

CONCLUSION

The Komodo dragon has attracted much interest since the early 1900s when stories got out about the islands with “dragons” on them. Realizing the Komodo dragon is the largest reptile alive and in limited numbers, scientists and the Indonesian government have done much to prevent extinction. The five islands, in which the Komodo dragons live, have National Parks which limits as much human interference as possible. Scientific studies on their genetics and reproduction habits also help to ensure their longevity.