

## The Nile Monitor *Varanus niloticus* is a bioindicator species of reptile found at Mount Tchabal Mbabo in the Adamaoua Region of Cameroon



*Varanus niloticus* © FODER 2020

**CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND**

An herpetological study was carried out in November 2020 by the Association FODER on the Tchabal Mbabo forest massif<sup>1</sup>, within the framework of the COGESPA-Tchabal Mbabo project<sup>2</sup>. Among the 14 species of Reptile identified during the trip, *Varanus niloticus* was one of the most important.

**Distribution and habitat:** The Nile Monitor Lizard is a specie with a very wide distribution found in tropical forests, savannas, jungles, swamps, and even at the edge of certain deserts where it is semi-aquatic (Pianka & King, 2004).

**Taxonomy:** The taxonomy of this specie is as follow. Kingdom: Animal; Sub-Kingdom: Bilateria; Infra-kingdom: Deuterostomia; Phylum: Chordata; Sub-phylum: Vertebrates; Class: Reptiles, Genus: *Varanus*; Scientific names: *Varanus niloticus*.

**Ecological importance:** *Varanus niloticus* is an effective factor in ecology in sub-Saharan Africa where it is useful to indicate the degree of contamination of the environment<sup>3</sup> and especially of wetlands the Pollutants.

Given the importance of watercourses at the level of the Tchabal Mbabo Forest massif, and in particular to be drunk by both livestock and wild animals, the presence of this species in the area could be of paramount importance to assess the quality of water in order to direct the livestock to the best drinking places.

**Conservation status:** The Nile monitor belongs to Appendix II of CITES and “class B” of Cameroonian law in accordance with decree N ° 0053 / MINFOF / of April 1, 2020. It is therefore partially protected. So any trade and extractions of females or eggs is prohibited.

<sup>1</sup>The Tchabal Mbabo forest massif is located in the Adamawa region, between the departments of Mayo Banyo and Faro and Déo, more precisely in the districts of Banyo, Galim Tignère and Kontcha.

<sup>2</sup>The “Projet d’appui à la conservation et à la gestion participative du Massif forestier de Tchabal Mbabo” is implemented in Cameroon by the Association Forêts et Développement Rural (FODER) in partnership with the NGO TRAFFIC thanks to the financial support of Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) through BirdLife International.

<sup>3</sup> The determination of organochlorine pesticides in the Nile monitor’s adipose tissue and organophosphate pesticides in their liver makes it possible to assess the degree of contamination of their living environment.