

Komodo dragon dies at Indonesia's 'death zoo'

February 1 2014



A plain-clothes policeman holds a dead komodo dragon, at Surabaya zoo in East Java, Indonesia, on February 1, 2014

A three-year-old komodo dragon has died at an Indonesian zoo infamous for scores of animal deaths, zoo officials said Saturday.

A zookeeper found the dragon dead in its cage on Saturday morning when he came to feed the [giant lizard](#).

"I moved its tail, but it didn't respond and when I checked, its eyes were already shut," said zookeeper Suraji, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.

The [zoo](#) was conducting an autopsy to find the cause of death, zoo spokesman Agus Supangkat said.

The Surabaya zoo, the biggest in Indonesia, has seen 105 animal deaths since July 2013, Supangkat added.

The [komodo dragon](#) is the fifth fatality at the zoo since the start of the year, following the [death](#) of a deer a day earlier, he added.

An 18-month-old African lion died earlier in January after getting its head caught in cables in its cage.

The management of the zoo has been taken over by the Surabaya city administration, but the deaths have not stopped and animal welfare groups continue to call for its closure.

The komodo dragons are native to several Indonesian islands, where their habitat is protected, and are considered a vulnerable species, with only a few thousand left in the world.



A group of komodo dragons feast on a fresh goat carcass at the Surabaya Zoo on March 20, 2013

The world's largest monitor lizards, they can grow up to three metres and weigh up to 70 kilograms (154 pounds).

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