herpy

SNAKES

## Boa Constrictor

# *Boa constrictor*

*Boa constrictor* is a heavily built boa from South America, especially east of the Andes, brown to grey with dark saddle markings and a tail that in many local forms is reddish brown to red. It reaches 180-300 cm, is active at dusk and at night and lives 20-30 years. It is larger than the closely related *Boa imperator* and requires a large enclosure, infrequent meals and a keeper who can take responsibility for decades.

Family: Boidae  Former name: *Constrictor constrictor*

### KEY FACTS

#### THE ANIMAL

| | |
|---|---|
| Adult size | **180-300 cm**<br>total length incl. tail |
| Lifespan | **20-30 years** |
| Active | **At dusk and at night** |
| Lifestyle | **Arboreal and terrestrial** |
| Habitat | **Savanna, dry forest and rainforest** |
| Difficulty | **Intermediate** |

#### CARE

| | |
|---|---|
| Min. enclosure | **240 × 120 × 120 cm**<br>L × W × H for 1 adult |
| Temperature, day | **24-30 °C** |
| Basking spot | **30-32 °C** |
| Temperature, night | **20-24 °C** |
| Humidity | **55-75%** |
| Water | **Water dish** |
| UVB | **Recommended**<br>Ferguson zone 2 |
| Diet | **Vertebrates** |
| Kept | **Singly** |

#### BREEDING

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|---|---|
| Reproduction | **Live-bearing** |
| Sexually mature | **18-48 months** |
| Litter size | **10-65 young** |
| Gestation | **100-120 days** |

#### PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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| CITES | **Appendix II** |
| EU annex | **Annex B** |
| IUCN | **Least Concern (LC)** |

## Care at a glance

**THE ENCLOSURE**
An adult animal over 240 cm needs an enclosure of at least 240 × 120 × 120 cm (length × width × height), and smaller adults of 180-240 cm at least 180 × 90 × 90 cm.

**TEMPERATURE**
There must be a gradient from cold to warm. The air at the basking spot must be 30-32 °C and the cold end 24-26 °C, and the whole enclosure should contain zones between 24 and 32 °C.

**HUMIDITY AND WATER**
Humidity should be 55-75 % and fluctuate a little. Briefly above 70 % does no harm if the enclosure is allowed to dry out, whereas persistent damp causes mould. Before a shed, 75-85 % can help the animal to shed in one piece.

**LIGHTING AND UVB**
The species is nocturnal and does not need strong light, but UVB is recommended. It belongs to Ferguson zone 2: occasional sun-basking. The target is a UV index of 2-3 at the basking spot.

**FEEDING**
*B. constrictor* is a carnivore and must be given whole prey. Young animals get mice and small rats, and adults get rats, young rabbits, guinea pigs, chicks and quail. Variety is healthy.

**BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING**
*B. constrictor* is an intelligent, individual snake. Some animals tolerate and like handling, others prefer to be left in peace. Hatchlings and young animals are often nervous and may hiss and bite.

**NATIVE RANGE**
Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, French Guiana, Suriname, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina and Trinidad & Tobago.