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SNAKES

Four-lined Ratsnake

Elaphe quatuorlineata

A powerful, calm ratsnake from Italy and the Balkans that as an adult carries four dark stripes along a yellowish-brown to greyish-brown body and reaches 150-200 cm. *Elaphe quatuorlineata* is among the largest snakes in Europe, climbs well and needs a large, tall, escape-proof enclosure and a cool winter rest in order to breed.

Family: Colubridae Former name: *Coluber quatuorlineatus; Elaphis quaterradiatus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**150-200 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**By day and at dusk**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rocky terrain and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-28 °C**
Basking spot	**30-33 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Winter rest	**10-12 °C** 12-16 weeks
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**4-18 eggs**
Incubation	**55-65 days** at 28-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Not listed**
IUCN	**Least Concern (LC)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

Elaphe quatuorlineata is a large, climbing snake and needs a large, tall and well-ventilated enclosure. The minimum size for an adult is 120 × 60 × 90 cm (length × width × height).

TEMPERATURE

There must be a clear temperature gradient. The background temperature is 24-28 °C by day, and under the heat source there should be a basking spot of 30-33 °C, so the snake can warm up. At night 20-24 °C is maintained.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity should be moderate, about 40-60 %, in a well-ventilated enclosure. A precise figure has not been documented for the species, but in the wild it prefers warm, slightly humid places with shade.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Elaphe quatuorlineata is active by day and at dusk and needs a clear day and night, controlled by a timer. The light is gradually reduced in autumn and increased again in spring, so the animal gets a natural seasonal rhythm.

FEEDING

Elaphe quatuorlineata eats whole rodents, chicks and eggs and takes frozen and thawed prey without difficulty in captivity.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Elaphe quatuorlineata is calm, shy and tame and seldom bites. It is somewhat sluggish and a keen climber, and it is hardy and eats well in captivity.

NATIVE RANGE

Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania, Greece and Bulgaria.