herpy

SNAKES

Amur Ratsnake

Elaphe schrenckii

Elaphe schrenckii is a powerful, diurnal ratsnake from north-eastern Asia. Adults are black or dark brown with pale crossbands and yellow markings around the mouth, grow to 120-160 cm and readily climb. The species thrives at room temperature, is inquisitive and calm, and is easy to keep.

Family: Colubridae Former name: *Orthriophis schrenckii*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**120-160 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Wetland and temperate woodland and meadow**
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**120 × 60 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-26 °C**
Basking spot	**27-28 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-22 °C**
Humidity	**40-60%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Winter rest	**8-12 °C** 8-13 weeks
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Sexually mature	**36-60 months**
Clutch size	**6-19 eggs**
Incubation	**40-60 days** at 26-28 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

A single adult snake needs an enclosure of at least 120 × 60 × 90 cm (length × width × height), and a pair at least 150 × 60 × 90 cm. Height is important because the species climbs a great deal and uses all the space it is given.

TEMPERATURE

During the day the enclosure should be 22-26 °C, with a warm zone of 27-28 °C at one end so that the snake can digest its food, and 21-22 °C at the cool end. At night ordinary room temperature, around 20-22 °C, is suitable.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Humidity should be moderate, around 40-60%. The humidity of the room and a large water bowl are enough, and misting the whole enclosure every few days helps if shedding is a problem.

LIGHTING AND UVB

The species is diurnal and likes to bask. A full-spectrum fluorescent tube benefits the snake, which often lies under it. UVB is optional, and no specific UV index has been documented.

FEEDING

Elaphe schrenckii is fed frozen and thawed rodents as its staple diet. In the wild it also eats birds, bird eggs and fish. Quail eggs and fish without thiaminase can be given for variety no more than once a month.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

The species is inquisitive and calm and one of the most easily handled large ratsnakes. It is active all day, follows everything that happens outside the enclosure and would rather flee than bite.

NATIVE RANGE

Russia, China, South Korea, North Korea and Mongolia.