herpy

SNAKES

Beauty rat snake

Elaphe taeniura

A large, slender and alert snake from South, South-East and East Asia that grows to 150-200 cm and is recognised by the black stripe behind each eye and the dark markings on a yellowish-brown to olive body. *Elaphe taeniura* is diurnal, likes to climb and needs a large, tall and escape-proof enclosure.

Family: Colubridae Former name: *Orthriophis taeniurus; Elaphe taeniurus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**150-200 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-25 years**
Active	**By day**
Lifestyle	**Arboreal and terrestrial**
Habitat	**Rainforest and rocky terrain**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**180 × 60 × 90 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**24-28 °C**
Basking spot	**30-31 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**50-80%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Egg-laying**
Clutch size	**4-15 eggs**
Incubation	**55-65 days** at 28-29 °C

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Not listed**
EU annex	**Annex D**
IUCN	**Vulnerable (VU)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	The care of *Elaphe taeniura* is based mainly on *Elaphe taeniura friesei* from Taiwan, which is the subspecies most often kept. It probably applies to the other subspecies as well.
TEMPERATURE	There must be a clear temperature gradient, so that the snake can choose for itself.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	Humidity should be 50-80 %, and it should not fall below 50 %. During a shed it should be higher, about 80 %. A humid hide with damp sphagnum, misted daily, is essential for a clean shed.
LIGHTING AND UVB	*Elaphe taeniura* is diurnal and needs a clear day and night. The light is on for 12 hours a day, controlled by a timer. Night lighting is not used. Special lighting is not necessary, but UVB can be offered to a diurnal species.
FEEDING	*Elaphe taeniura* eats whole, frozen and thawed rodents. Young get newborn or small mice, subadults larger mice and small rats, and adults small to medium-sized rats. Chicks and eggs can add variety. Live prey is not recommended.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Elaphe taeniura* is alert, quick and shy. Captive-bred animals that are handled regularly from a young age usually become as calm to handle as *Pantherophis guttatus*. If they are not used to it, they become nervous.
NATIVE RANGE	China, Taiwan, India, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Japan.