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SNAKES

Kenyan sand boa

Eryx colubrinus

Eryx colubrinus is a small, heavily built boa from the arid regions of East Africa that spends most of its time buried in sand with only its upward-facing eyes above the surface. It is calm, does not need much space and can live to 20-30 years, so it is a good choice for anyone wanting a first snake.

Family: Boidae English name: Kenyan Sand Boa Former name: *Gongylophis colubrinus; Eryx thebaicus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**40-65 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**20-30 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Desert and semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**60 × 30 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-28 °C**
Basking spot	**33-35 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-25 °C**
Humidity	**20-40%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Recommended** Ferguson zone 2
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Litter size	**10-20 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Gestation	**120-180 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE

An adult *Eryx colubrinus* needs an enclosure of at least 60 × 30 × 30 cm (length × width × height), preferably 90 × 45 × 45 cm. Females that are larger than average need more than the minimum.

TEMPERATURE

Eryx colubrinus tolerates dry, hot conditions. There must be a warm end and a cool end. The surface under the heat source should be 33-35 °C, and the cool end 26-28 °C. At night the temperature may fall to 22-25 °C.

HUMIDITY AND WATER

Eryx colubrinus lives in a dry climate, and the enclosure should be dry most of the time. Humidity is best around 20-40 %; the figure is an estimate based on the habitat.

LIGHTING AND UVB

Eryx colubrinus is most active at dusk and at night and can live without UVB, but a weak UVB tube is recommended, because it supports the daily rhythm and covers the need for vitamin D3.

FEEDING

Eryx colubrinus is a carnivore and takes whole prey. The staple food is mice: adult females can take a large adult mouse, adult males a large hopper mouse.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING

Eryx colubrinus is calm and seldom bites. Let new animals settle in for two weeks and begin handling only when they are eating regularly.

NATIVE RANGE

Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Tanzania and Somalia.