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SNAKES

Rough-scaled sand boa

Eryx conicus

Eryx conicus is a small, heavily built sand boa from arid South Asia. It lies buried in loose soil with only its eyes and snout above the surface, waiting for prey. The female grows almost twice as long as the male. The species is calm and hardy, gives birth to live young and suits a beginner, although some animals are fussy feeders.

Family: Boidae English name: Rough-scaled Sand Boa Former name: *Gongylophis conicus*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**45-95 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-20 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert and dry forest**
Difficulty	**Beginner**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**75 × 40 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**26-28 °C**
Basking spot	**30-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**22-26 °C**
Humidity	**50-65%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Litter size	**7-12 young**
Clutches per year	**1**
Gestation	**120-150 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

CITES	**Appendix II**
EU annex	**Annex B**
IUCN	**Near Threatened (NT)**

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE
An adult needs an enclosure of at least 75 × 40 × 30 cm (length × width × height); large females approaching 90 cm need 90 × 45 × 30 cm. The species uses almost no height, so floor area is what counts.

TEMPERATURE
Eryx conicus needs a warm end and a cool end. The basking spot should be 30-32 °C, and the rest of the enclosure 26-28 °C by day. At night the temperature can fall to 22-26 °C, but this is not necessary for the snake's health.

HUMIDITY AND WATER
The species comes from dry regions, but humidity should be 50-65% so that shedding goes well. The substrate must be dry; the moisture comes from the air and from a humid hide. A hygrometer shows whether the figure holds.

LIGHTING AND UVB
The species is most active at dusk and at night.

FEEDING
Eryx conicus takes whole prey. The staple food is mice. Preferably give thawed prey rather than live, because prey can bite and injure the snake. Thawed prey is taken more readily if it is moved with long tweezers.

BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING
E. conicus is calm and hardy and seldom bites. Let new animals settle for two weeks, and start handling only when they are feeding regularly. Keep the first sessions short, and support the whole body.

NATIVE RANGE
India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.