herpy

SNAKES

Javelin Sand Boa

Eryx jaculus

Eryx jaculus is a small, heavy-bodied sand boa and one of the few boas that live wild in Europe. It burrows into loose soil in dry, open landscapes from the Balkans and the Mediterranean islands to North Africa and the Middle East, and does well in a simple, dry enclosure with a deep burrowing layer.

Family: Boidae Former name: *Eryx turcicus; Boa turcica*

KEY FACTS

THE ANIMAL

Adult size	**40-80 cm** total length incl. tail
Lifespan	**15-25 years**
Active	**At dusk and at night**
Lifestyle	**Terrestrial and burrowing**
Habitat	**Semi-desert**
Difficulty	**Intermediate**

CARE

Min. enclosure	**75 × 40 × 30 cm** L × W × H for 1 adult
Temperature, day	**22-28 °C**
Basking spot	**30-32 °C**
Temperature, night	**20-24 °C**
Humidity	**30-50%**
Water	**Water dish**
UVB	**Optional**
Winter rest	**14-18 °C** 8-12 weeks
Diet	**Vertebrates**
Kept	**Singly**

BREEDING

Reproduction	**Live-bearing**
Litter size	**4-15 young**
Gestation	**120 days**

PROTECTION AND PAPERWORK

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

Care at a glance

THE ENCLOSURE	Little documented information exists on the care of *Eryx jaculus*.
TEMPERATURE	The heat comes from below. Put a heat tape or heat mat under no more than a quarter of the floor at one end, controlled by a thermostat, so that the substrate at the warm end is 30-32 °C. A gravid female needs 32-35 °C.
HUMIDITY AND WATER	*Eryx jaculus* lives in a dry climate, and the enclosure should be dry. Humidity is best at 30-50 %; the figure is an estimate based on the habitat. Change the water in the bowl regularly.
LIGHTING AND UVB	UVB is not documented as necessary for *E. jaculus*, and the species spends most of its time hidden. A weak UVB tube can be offered as an option, provided there is plenty of cover as well.
FEEDING	*Eryx jaculus* takes whole prey. The staple is small mice, preferably newborn or half-grown, because sand boas prefer prey that is not much thicker than themselves. Prefer thawed prey to live prey.
BEHAVIOUR AND HANDLING	*Eryx jaculus* is a secretive, calm snake that spends most of its time buried. It very rarely bites and uses the defensive postures described under the description instead.
NATIVE RANGE	Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Palestinian Territories, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, North Macedonia, Italy, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia.